

news

Universities devise new entry system

JUDITH JUDD

Education Editor

Students would be able to apply to university immediately after they receive their A-level results under proposals for a new two-stage system being drawn up by universities.

At present, those wanting to start university in the year they take A-levels have to apply during the previous December for entry in September, a few weeks after A-level results are published.

But Tony Higgins, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) yesterday said a new procedure could be in place for those starting A-level courses the year after next and aiming at university entry in 1999.

Under the proposals, students who applied in the first phase would have four choices of university or college instead of the present six and would only be allowed to hold one conditional offer instead of two.

"Only 6 per cent of entrants come from their second choice,

spring term, after they had sat their mock A-levels.

One of the reasons why the system needed reform, he said, was that 65 per cent of A-level grade predictions made by teachers were proved wrong.

Under the proposals, students who applied in the first phase would have four choices of university or college instead of the present six and would only be allowed to hold one conditional offer instead of two.

"It is just a waste of space," he said.

The second phase would start in May and continue until the end of September, so that students could wait until after they received their A-level results in August. They would then be allowed three choices, which would be sent in order to the three universities.

The present "clearing" system, in which students have to find out where places are available and join the scramble to secure them in late August and

September would therefore disappear.

If the vice-chancellors agree to the proposals, Mr Higgins and his officials will work out the detail and consult interested parties.

Schools are keen to change

the system to reduce the uncertainty for applicants who have to gamble on getting the right grades. Universities say so far been cautious. They worry that there may not be enough time to process all the applications after A-level or to interview

candidates in those subjects where interviews are essential.

The new proposals are a compromise between the two points of view, Mr Higgins said that, initially, most students would probably apply during the first phase but he hoped that growing numbers would realise that applying after A-level made sense.

He told the seminar, organised by Cambridge Occupational Analysis: "The present system can lead to real unfairness. Admissions tutors start in-

terviewing in the autumn term. Some fill up on the 'first come first served' basis though, if we hear of it, we come down on them like a ton of bricks. Others reject some early candidates because they know some equally good ones will come along later."

A Government-commissioned report to be published next week will show that higher education applicants with advanced vocational qualifications (GNVQs) are generally well prepared for their courses.

IN BRIEF

School truancy leading to crime

More than 7 out of 10 children bunk off school and a quarter play truant at least one day a week, a Home Office-funded survey has found.

The study of 1,106 pupils found that a significant number of truants were involved in crime or were drawn into illegal activities such as under-age sex and drug-taking.

However, the report, *Truancy - The Partnership Approach*, said that when initiatives by the police, schools, local authorities, and retailers, were carried out crime fell, school attendance improved and town centres became safer.

IRA kidnap fear

Police in Northern Ireland were last night searching for a man believed to have been snatched by an IRA punishment squad. John Hegarty, 19, had earlier been questioned by police about the theft of £16,000 worth of Christmas savings from a church community centre in Strabane, Co Tyrone.

Sea birds killed

Marine pollution experts are investigating an oil slick which has killed sea birds in Dyfed, west Wales. The oil is affecting about eight miles of coast between Cefn Sidan beach and the Pembrey country park. The bodies of about 45 cormorants and guillemots have been found.

Pilots disciplined

Two Britannia Airways pilots who flew an empty Boeing 767 away from the normal flight path in order to pass over the home of the first officer to greet his wife have been disciplined by the airline. Capt Hugh Carmichael has resigned from the airline and former first officer Michael Stanley has lost seniority and faced "severe disciplinary sanctions" over the incident which occurred at Congleton, Cheshire, on 30 October.

Murder inquiry

Police in Warwickshire were last night questioning four people in connection with the murder of 15-year-old Naomi Smith in Ansley Common, near Nuneaton. Naomi was stabbed and sexually assaulted at a recreation ground near her home on 14 September.

Cleaner beaches

Britain's bathing beaches were their cleanest ever this year, with 89 per cent meeting the European Union's legal standard for sewage pollution, compared to 82 per cent last year. By law they should all comply next year - but it is highly unlikely that they will.

Bouncing with health

Young women should jump on the spot 50 times a day to prevent the onset of brittle bone disease in later life, according to a report by Dr Joan Bassey, of the Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, published in the *Annals of Rheumatic Diseases*.

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Ford walk-out as pay offer is turned down

BARRIE CLEMENT

Labour Editor

More than 1,000 Ford workers yesterday staged unofficial stoppages in protest at an inflation-busting "final" pay offer worth a minimum of £9.25 per cent over two years.

The walk-outs came as the Government announced that the inflation rate had dropped from 3.9 per cent to 3.2 per cent, as compared with a proposed increase at Ford this year of 4.75 per cent.

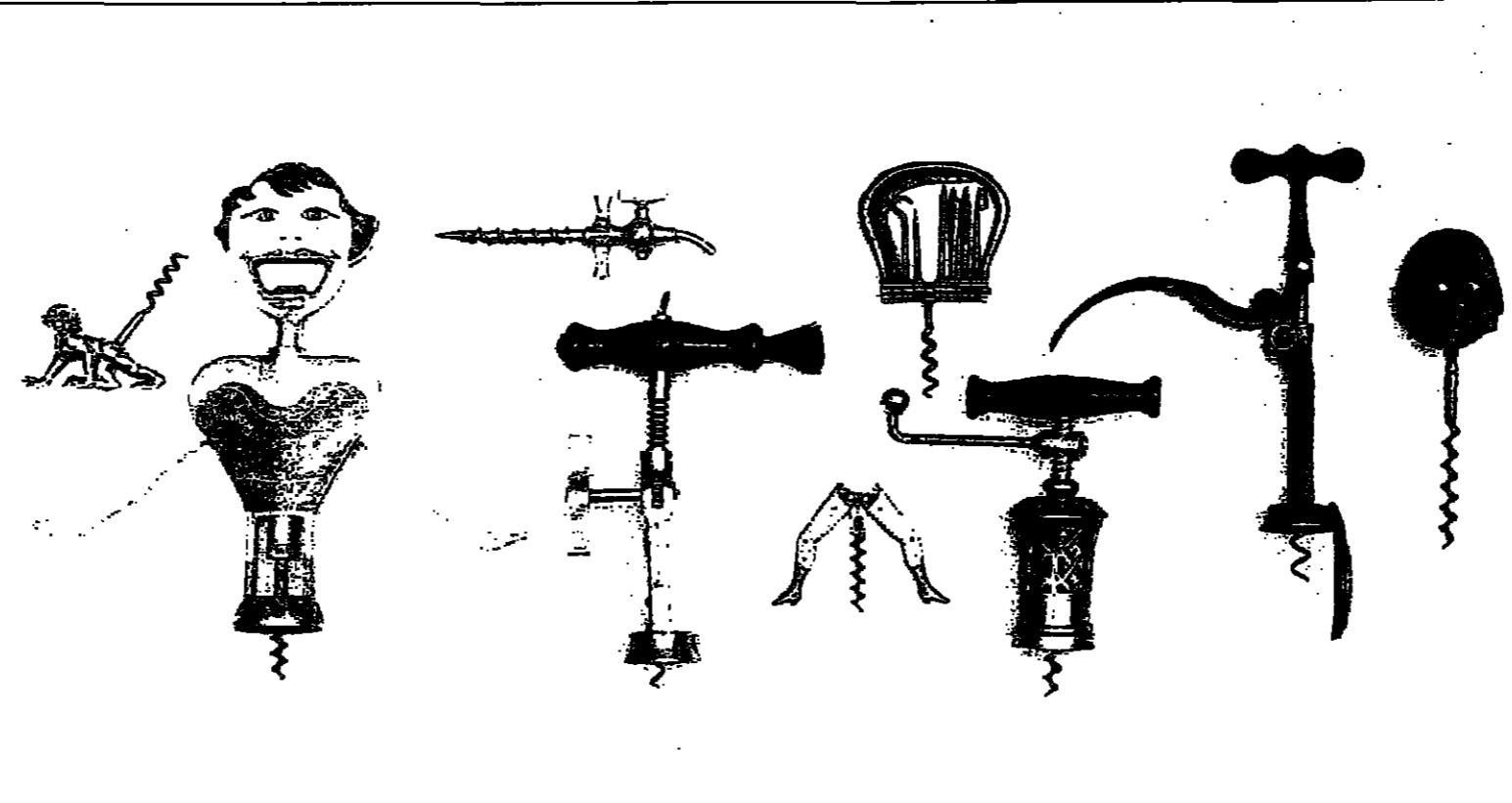
Union leaders, who will be expected to repudiate the wildcat action or face stiff legal penalties, professed surprise at the militancy of their members at the Dagenham assembly plant and the normally moderate employees at Southampton.

Senior officials at the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union predicted that while the two plants would revert to normal working today, other divisions of Ford UK, including the parts delivery service based at Dagenham, might decide to emulate yesterday's "spontaneous action".

Union leaders at the Bridgend and Halewood complexes were minded to accept the company's proposals during 12 hours of negotiations on Wednesday, but they were outvoted two to one by representatives from other Ford works.

Plant representatives are to meet next Wednesday to consider the results of a consultation process and are expected to call for fresh negotiations with management. Some union insiders believe the company will not improve its offer unless there is a substantial majority for industrial action in a ballot.

The proposals would give the 22,000 hourly-paid Ford workers a 4.5 per cent rise next year, or the inflation rate, plus 0.5 per cent, whichever is higher.



A lot of bottle: Part of a collection of antique corkscrews to be auctioned at Christie's in London on 22 November

Photograph: John Voos

Siamese twin boy dies during separation

One of the Siamese twin boys born in London five days ago has died during an eight-hour operation to separate them and the other is fighting for his life, it was disclosed yesterday, writes Glenda Cooper.

No Siamese twin born with a fused heart has ever survived,

but surgeons said yesterday there was a good chance of the surviving twin, who is now in intensive care, making a recovery.

The "incredibly complicated" surgery took place at Great Ormond Street Hospital in central London. The twins, from Kuwait and born five weeks premature, had been joined from the breastbone to the navel and had fused hearts and livers.

The consultant paediatric surgeon Mr Edward Kiely, who led the operating team, said: "I

think we're quite pleased to have one baby alive ... We knew there was always going to be the potential that the second one would die. We were quite concerned that both would die, as happened with conjoined hearts before."

A paediatric surgery professor, Lewis Spitz, and a consultant cardiac surgeon, Marc de Leval, also took part in the 12-hour operation.

The twins had been delivered by Caesarean section at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, west London, last week before being transferred.

It was the first time the team, the most expert in the field in Europe, had attempted to separate conjoined twins with fused hearts. Before the operation the surgeons gave the parents a 10

per cent chance of one of the twins surviving.

The major problem facing them was that only one heart was functioning properly, Mr de Leval said: "We realised that the good heart was supporting the bad heart. When we disconnected the two, the bad heart could not support the circulation of the twin who died."

He said that after the surgeons thought they had separated the hearts, they realised there was a second, hidden connection between them. It took 10 minutes to find the join.

The surgeon said the next few days would be critical. But Professor Spitz said: "The child has got a normal heart, which is a big advantage. We would be very disappointed if he did not survive."

The Queen Mother underwent a hip replacement operation yesterday but is making "a good recovery", Buckingham Palace said last night.

The one-and-a-half-hour operation on her right hip, at King Edward VII's Hospital for Officers in London, was "completed successfully". The operation on the Queen Mother, 95, was planned, on the advice of her doctors, and was not emergency surgery. She is expected to remain in hospital for about two weeks.

The Arthritis and Rheumatism Council said the Queen Mother was one of the oldest people in the world to undergo hip replacement but the prospects for a new pain-free life after her operation were "extremely good". A spokesman said: "The man-made replacement, of plastic and metal, removes all pain and usually results in improved mobility. There is a 95 per cent success rate for such operations."

The Queen Mother's pain and discomfort has been noticeable recently and she has relied on a walking stick or wheelchair for some time. Most recently she has been driven around on public engagements in a power buggy.

At her last public appearance

- the Field of Remembrance Service at Westminster Abbey a week ago - the Queen Mother walked with difficulty using two sticks, and she was not present at the Cenotaph on Sunday for the Remembrance Day Service.

Although hip replacement is a standard procedure carried out routinely on 50,000 patients each year, the effect of surgery on a 95-year-old is bound to cause concern.

In almost every case the patient is elderly and usually suffering from painful arthritis. Most patients stay two or three weeks in hospital, but it can take three months before they can walk unassisted and six months to a year before they make a full recovery.

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End of the line for 'Today': The newspaper that broke the mould is the victim of falling sales and a harsh economic climate

Colourful days and the death of Eddy's dream

STEVE BOGGAN

As the world's first seven-day electronic newspaper was being put to bed on 3 March 1986, its editor, Brian MacArthur, gathered his exhausted staff together and thanked them.

"Tonight, we've reached the green fields despite the scoffers, the cynics and fair weather friends. It's a magnificent achievement by all of you," he said. It was indeed an achievement that *Today* came out at all that night. Computer failures dogged production; the new technology that was to have made the newspaper more up-to-the-minute than any other in history was not working; and, of course, the colour printing disaster that was to have become the hallmark of *Today* was only then being conceived.

Recalling the launch later, Mr MacArthur wrote: "As they left the party celebrating the launch,

most staff knew in their hearts that the paper was disappointing... The greatest betrayal was the quality of the colour, the great promise of *Today*. We had a genuinely historic picture of the Queen. It had been transmitted in seconds down a telephone line... scanner machine, the first time that computer technology had been used to transmit new pictures from Australia, where the Queen was on tour, to Britain. As it appeared on the front page, however, the colour was smudged."

It was to have been a technological dream, but it turned into a nightmare for Mr MacArthur and Eddy Shah, the Warrington newspaper proprietor who broke the union stranglehold over print production and launched the first new national newspaper in decades.

Production free from the interference of unions and press

barons and direct inputting by journalists was to have been the future. On the back of the dream came other newspapers. Some, like the *Independent*, survived. Others like the *London Daily News* and the *Sunday Correspondent*, failed.

There was a tremendous sense of optimism before the launch. Michael Williams, a former *Today* features editor, recalled, "It was to have been a truly independent, classless newspaper using the latest in technology to produce a clean, colour newspaper with a USA *Today* style of presentation. But we weren't ready. Shah set a premature deadline... the staff couldn't cope with the technology. It was chaos and pandemonium come launch time."

On day one, Mr MacArthur said the paper sold more than 1 million copies and could have sold 3 million. But, with daily sales down to 550,000 within months, 400,000 lower than projected, *Today* ran into severe financial trouble and was sold in a £24m deal to Tiny Rowland's Lonrho in June 1986.

In June 1987, with circulation at just 300,000, Rupert Murdoch bought the paper in a £40m deal and installed as editor David Montgomery, editor of the *News of the World*. He transformed the paper into a brash, sharp read for the aspiring executive. He was the first to identify the yuppie as a sexy tabloid subject, filling the paper with pound signs, power dressing, mobile phones and property prices. Paradoxically, he was also the first to notice the new wave of green consumerism. He married the two, doubled circulation within a year and earned a Newspaper of the Year title.

For a time, *Today* was seen as a threat to both the *Daily Mail* and the *Mirror*, but that threat subsided with yuppiedom and the fortunes of the Greens. With sales falling below half a million again, 45 journalists were made

redundant in January 1991. Mr Montgomery stood down several months later, making way for Martin Dunn, deputy editor of the *Sun* to tidy up a product left shoddy after its move to Wapping. Mr Dunn's wells-beaten performance well, redesigning the paper and stemming the circulation drift, before moving handing over to

Richard Stott, who remained editor until yesterday.

Under the stewardship of

Mr Stott – a former *Mirror* and *People* editor – the paper leaned harder to the left and *Today* began to rip at the heels of government and the Establishment.

But circulation wasn't holding steady. It was down to 560,000 from 615,000 last year, and it was the paper's downfall. Despite its fresh lease of life as a campaigning paper, despite comparatively low overheads – offices in Wapping and shared News International premises – the newspaper group was no longer prepared to absorb the losses.

Last night, as its journalists pondered their future, *Today* was put to bed for the last time.

First edition: Eddy Shah, *Today's* founder, with a copy on launch day. Photograph: Reuter

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At the same time, the price war was all but abandoned last night. Next Monday, the *Times* will be on sale for 30p, up 5p.

Two months ago, the cover price was raised from 20p to 25p, allowing both the *Telegraph* and the *Independent* to follow suit, to 35p from 30p.

The *Telegraph*, which yesterday unveiled sharply lower profits for the year to date, said it was likely to raise its cover price as well, probably to 40p.

news

End of price war gives industry hope

Analysis



Murdoch: Would not absorb losses. Photograph: David Rose

A radical restructuring of Britain's newspaper market, launched yesterday with the closure of *Today*, will give the declining industry its first breathing space for three years.

While cost-cutting is likely to continue, the demise of one newspaper and the apparent end of the debilitating cover price war will together improve prospects throughout Fleet Street.

Sharp increases in newsprint prices – 40 per cent last year, with up to 15 per cent more expected in January – have badly squeezed profit margins across the industry. The price war, launched in mid-1993 by Rupert Murdoch's News International, exacerbated the pressures for all main United Kingdom titles, and forced most companies to pare back on expenses.

The closure of *Today* was an admission that the title would never make any money, according to News International insiders.

Having chalked up £140m in losses, Mr Murdoch decided, finally, to walk away. An offer this summer from Mohammed al-Fayed, owner of Harrods, to take *Today* off Mr Murdoch's hands was rejected in favour of closing the newspaper outright, the hope that some of its 500,000 readers would move to other NI titles, such as the *Times*.

Insiders at NI said the closure would also allow additional copies of the *Sun* to be printed, and that the company was planning to concentrate on building up its other titles, including the *Times*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Newspaper of the World*.

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Moreover, the rise in circulation hurt profits at News International at the very time that Mr Murdoch's cash needs elsewhere in the world, particularly in Asia, were growing. Profits from his master company were hit by development costs at Star-TV, the Asian satellite broadcasting company.

The UK newspaper industry anticipates much more action in coming months. In particular, speculation over the future of the ailing Express titles intensified yesterday. Media analysts expect Lord Stevens, chairman of United News and Media, either to sell the newspapers or to invest fresh funds to improve their chances of competing against the rival Mail titles. The end of the price war will make it easier for him to find funds for the needed investment.

While shares of all the publicly quoted newspaper companies rose yesterday, analysts warned that the long-term problems remained.

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news

Free and easy: While some national monuments now charge for entry, there is still a bustling alternative culture for the day-tripper



Star turn: Visitors watch a free performance by a street entertainer in Covent Garden, central London, yesterday

Photograph: John Voos

V&A director attacks 'silly' donations

DAVID LISTER

The director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Dr Alan Borg, yesterday described the museum's system of asking visitors for voluntary donations as "silly", claiming it just made people feel uncomfortable and did not raise revenue efficiently.

As revealed in the *Independent* yesterday, Dr Borg wants to end this system, and is an advocate of compulsory charges. At a meeting with journalists he spelled out the enormous sums the museum now needs, claiming that most of its 144 galleries were sub-standard.

Dr Borg took over as director of the V&A from Dame Elizabeth Estee-Coll last month. He has already made changes to the management system she introduced. "I have removed one layer of management," he said. "One effect of that has been to bring the curators closer to the centre."

He added that millions needed to be spent on bringing the museum up to a proper standard. "We have got galleries which to my mind are a disgrace to a national museum," he said.

"The British art and design galleries are poor. We haven't



Dr Alan Borg: made changes

got an education centre, which is amazing for a place that was set up with a remit of education. Some galleries are appallingly displayed, one has been closed for living memory. The Islamic gallery is appalling. The Henry Cole wing galleries are a disgrace. The majority of galleries need upgrading, from very serious upgrading to making sure everything has a label. The ceramics galleries are very poorly displayed with labels that go back to before the war."

On the question of charging, Dr Borg, who introduced admission charges at the Imperial War Museum, said he did not have a specific figure in mind, but added: "It is not a question of affordability. Referring to gallery closures, he said: "I would rather have an entrance charge which could keep the galleries open." He added that the museum, which receives a £30m grant from government, was moving towards a deficit.

In an article to be published in *Antique Collector*, Dr Borg says that the majority of people who visit the V&A "could afford to pay a £10 entrance fee if they had to". At present visitors are asked to give a £4.50 donation.

It will be up to the trustees, headed by Lord Armstrong of Ilminster, the former Cabinet Secretary, to decide whether to bring in compulsory admission charges. Dr Borg said the voluntary system was silly and made people feel uncomfortable and he would prefer to remove the voluntary charges.

Meanwhile, the V&A is planning to renew its premises by launching an architectural competition for a £40m building on part of its site. It will apply for up to £20m of millennium funding for the project.

BBC gets \$1m for Diana interview

CLARE GARNER

The BBC has been besieged by bids for the rights to broadcast the Panorama interview with the Princess of Wales and yesterday raked a reported \$1m from a single deal with ABC, one of America's major networks. Billed as an ABC News Special, the interview will be broadcast on Friday 24 November at 9pm.

ABC, which struck a news-gathering partnership with the BBC in July 1993, outbid its three main rivals for what is being dubbed the scoop of the century. The BBC insisted that ABC paid a "fair market rate" but refused to be specific about the price paid.

As Britons sit down to watch the interview on Monday evening, the programme will simultaneously be broadcast by BBC World and BBC Prime, which together reach 46 million homes worldwide.

At a press conference yesterday, Panorama reporter Martin Bashir said the Princess

of Wales was given no preferential treatment and insisted that there had been "no paid intermediary... no Mr Big or Mr Fix It" to secure the interview.

I was able to outline the general areas of discussion but no specific questions were given to anyone beforehand," he said.

Mr Bashir insisted that the interview had emerged from more general research into the monarchy and said the BBC had approached the Princess rather than the other way round.

"The invitation came from us. It was not suggested to us by anyone else," he said. "You know and I know that you use first hand sources if you can," he added.

Mr Bashir, who in the past has presented *Songs of Praise*, said that because he had never done a royal story before, he had been unaware of the enormity of the scoop.

Mr Bashir was unable to predict what effect the interview would have on the monarchy saying he was "a professional doing his job".

Something for nothing? All you need is a spot of lateral thinking

DAVID LISTER
Arts Correspondent

Like most of London's museums now, the Science Museum in South Kensington charges for admission. But for those eager to broaden the frontiers of their knowledge, they can boldly go where few men have gone before - to Willesden Green - and have an alternative science lecture for free.

Every week expert "alternative thinkers" give free talks. Last night's advocated the theory that diseases arrive on our planet from comets that have travelled from outer space.

While increasing parts of the capital's high culture move to charging customers, with the new head of the Victoria and Albert an advocate of admission charges, there remains a bustling alternative culture for the visitor or family on a day out. And it's free. So too are the national monuments to high culture: the British Museum, the National and Tate galleries. Up to 50 lesser museums and galleries in London are still free. But with the Science, Natur-

al History, National Maritime and Imperial War museums all having compulsory charges, and the V&A asking euphemistically for voluntary donations, it can pay to think laterally. And some of London's free attractions certainly demand a certain amount of lateral thinking.

They still change the guard at Buckingham Palace. And you still do not need a penny to see it, though you need a pocket calculator to plan your visit. It is advertised as being "on alternate days, on even dates in November and December, not in very wet weather or on certain ceremonial days".

Free too is the Albert Memorial. The memorial itself, a masterpiece of Gothic revival with nearly 200 statues, is shrouded by scaffolding and hidden from view, but an exhibition in the adjacent visitors' centre shows what it would look like if it were visible.

The London Tourist Board points out that the capital's parks are free, many with free concerts, and so is the capital's pageantry, events like the State Opening of Parliament, the Lord Mayor's Show, Trafalgar Day Parade and trooping the Colour, though it adds laterally "although sometimes you have to pay for the best view".

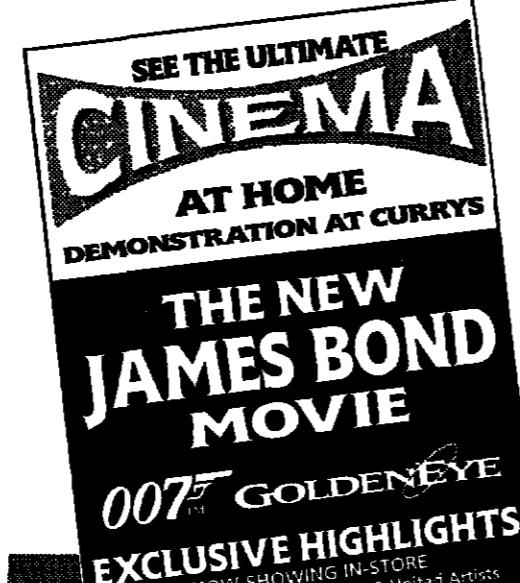
It is proud of what it calls free eccentric entertainment, such as Speakers' Corner and the Peter Pan Cup Swimming Race.

There is non-eccentric entertainment in places like the South Bank Centre foyer, Westminster Abbey and Covent Garden piazza. The Oxford and Cambridge boat race can be viewed for free, so can the London marathon and the Notting Hill Carnival.

Free day in London

- 10am: British Museum
- 11.30am: Watch the Changing Of The Guard at St James's Park
- 2pm: National Gallery
- 4pm: Visit the 10-Bear Christmas Grotto at Harrods (Beware: the toilets cost £1)
- 6pm: Join in with Carols In Trafalgar Square

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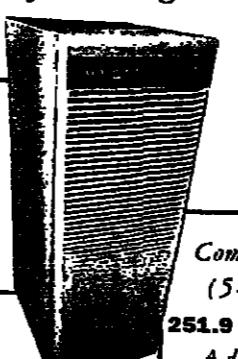
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Fighting the activists

Car culture creates new level of dependence

DAILY POEM
Quince, Sex

Fighting the activists: Bloodsports lobby launches £3.5m advertising campaign aimed at countering influence of animal rights movement



Country matters: Members of the Grafton Hunt in Oxfordshire out cubbing on one of the first hunts of the year

Photograph: Tom Pilston

New group to step up battle in the countryside

DANNY PENMAN

Britain's newest and probably most powerful bloodsport and countryside lobbying group was launched yesterday with a £3.5m advertising campaign.

After months of secret preparations, the Countryside Movement was founded to protect the interests of rural Britain as well as those of the hunting, shooting and fishing lobbies.

The movement claims that rural Britain is poorly understood by urban dwellers and seeks to build a greater awareness and understanding through expensive and sustained advertising campaigns.

According to secret minutes of meetings held by the organisation obtained by the *Independent*, high on its list of priorities is countering the growing influence of animal welfare groups. It also aims to tackle land access groups such

as the Ramblers' Association. One of the full-page advertisements, which will appear in national newspapers from today, pictures a slatherman. The caption reads: "George Roberts head slatherman and animal lover". Another advertisement tackles organisations lobbying for greater land access rights. Beneath a picture of a footpath reads the caption "It goes right across farmer Stockdale's land. No one's defending your right to use it more than him."

The Countryside Movement, which is supported by some of Britain's richest and most influential landowners, drew criticism from the Ramblers' Association and the International Fund for Animal Welfare. Both groups accuse the new movement of being a front for the blood sports lobby and those who wish to restrict public access to the countryside.

David Beskine, a Ramblers'

Association spokesman, criticised the footpath and right to roam advertisement and demanded its withdrawal. "Survey after survey has shown that the greatest problem walkers face in the countryside is obstruction of footpaths," he said.

"There's a host of popular movements in this country concerned with animal rights, preserving the countryside and the right to roam and they [the Countryside Movement] think they can alter their growing influence with money. I don't think they'll succeed."

The IFAW described the advert as "patronising, glossy and totally without substance". Sir David Steel, the movement's executive chairman, said the aim of the advertising campaign was to build up a huge database of people with an interest in all aspects of the countryside who could be mobilised over key issues that affect them.

Car culture creates new level of dependence

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

People have become so addicted to their cars that they even use them for many journeys of under half a mile, according to research for the RAC.

The study, called *Car Dependence*, paints a picture of a society so transformed by widespread car ownership and use that most people can no longer think of life without wheels. The bald statistics of increasing car use show that, between 1950 and 1992, car ownership per household increased almost tenfold and as a result, people travelled, on average, three times as many miles per year.

As with all addictions, car dependence grows slowly. People buy a car when they can afford it and gradually their lifestyle changes so that they become unable to conceive of no longer having one. For example, they move to areas with little public transport, they obtain jobs too far away to travel by any other means or they have children who then need transporting.

Once people own a car, they make much less use of public transport and therefore the widespread increase in car ownership has sharply reduced the provision of public transport.

There has been, in particular, a sharp growth in the number of trips for shopping and for escorting children, both to school and to leisure activities, many of which involve short journeys. For example, nearly 7 per cent of journeys of under half a mile are now by car – nearly double the proportion in the 1970s. And 8.2 per cent of car journeys involve trips of less than one mile.

People in rural areas are the most dependent on car use, often being "forced" to use cars when their income cannot really support car ownership and therefore they sacrifice spending money on other basics such as food or housing.

International evidence suggests that car dependence is growing in nearly all developed countries. In only two countries is the proportion of journeys by car not increasing: in the US, where car use has virtually reached saturation point, for 98 per cent of all journeys, and the Netherlands, where the Government has long had a policy of introducing radical measures to encourage other modes of transport, such as rail and cycling.

The research, which used both existing data and new surveys, suggests that for around 20 per cent of journeys, cars are virtually the only means of making the trip. In about 60 per cent of cases, the journey could be made by other means but it would either take longer or be much less practical.

The RAC says the report shows that efforts to reduce traffic by imposing blanket measures on all motorists, such as petrol price increases or road tolls, are misguided.

Edmund King, the RAC's head of campaigns, said: "We should concentrate on trying to reduce the number of journeys in the 20 per cent of cases where there is actually a genuine alternative."

However, the report warns that allowing current trends to continue, transport conditions are bound to deteriorate since there will be more traffic on the roads and fewer alternative forms of travel.

Car Dependence is produced by the ESRC Transport Studies Unit, Oxford University, price £25.

Leading article, page 28

DAILY POEM

Quince, Sex

By Frederick Jones

Everywhere the walls are invisible as habit, remote. For the child the room is huge plains, each with its own geography of dust, sun and plants; only the window

shows they're walls at all. But glance through this window's single eye, and what's outside turns out the same as what's within, a pair of facing mirrors' endless reflections.

Newton timed the echo in Trinity Quad, and conned the pentagram and hexagon for some pattern outside the worldist. Seven bands of colour cross the darkened room

– and viridian, mauve, magenta, cyan, what of these? Fresh from the rowing eight and dressed to the nines a minister declares a decade of call it what you will.

Frederick Jones lectures in Latin and Ancient History at Liverpool University. He was the 1992 winner of the Felicia Hemans Prize for Lyrical Poetry and was shortlisted winner in the 1991 Northern Poetry Competition. *Congreve's Balsamic Elixir*, his first collection from which this poem is taken, (£6.95), is an intriguing composite of sweet and sour ministrations of time and place.



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10 international

Bonn opposition picks leader fit to tackle Kohl

IMRE KARACS
Mannheim

Amid scenes of jubilation befitting a great election victory, Germany's main opposition party, the Social Democrats, yesterday dumped the unpopular Rudolf Scharping, and acclaimed the colourful Oskar Lafontaine as their new leader.

The stunning coup, hatched overnight by Mr Lafontaine after a rousing speech at the SPD's conference in Mannheim, sent shivers down the spines of conservative politicians in Bonn. Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats, 14 points ahead in the latest polls, now face an energised opposition no longer dragged down by a leader devoid of ideas and charisma.

Until yesterday morning, Mr Scharping stood unchallenged for the post of chairman. Then, as fate would have it, he was who had to convey the news of his imminent demise: "I asked Oskar if he was going to be a candidate," Mr Scharping told the hushed questioner. "Oskar answered my question by saying he would run."

The announcement brought the roof down, rewarding Mr Scharping with the first real table-thumping ovation at a conference already into its third day. The party really took off an hour later, when the result of the ballot was read out. Mr Scharping, his pallid features turning ever paler, seemed to be choking back tears as his popularity within the party he has

led for two years was enumerated. Mr Lafontaine, who led the party's unsuccessful electoral challenge to Mr Kohl in 1990, had received 321 votes; Mr Scharping, defeated by Mr Kohl last year, a derisory 190.

"I was of the view that we needed clarity," Mr Scharping muttered. "Now we have it."

The new leader faces the task of uniting Social Democrats behind policies that can challenge the conservative hegemony. After a series of regional-election setbacks, the party has plunged to its lowest poll rating since the war.

Although Mr Lafontaine has only won a two-year term, his role in preparing the Social Democrats for the 1998 general elections will be crucial. "I am aware of my responsibilities and depend on all of you to support me," he said in his victory speech.

If charisma were all they needed, the Social Democrats would be home and dry. Mr Lafontaine, the 52-year-old prime minister of Saarland, has bags of wit and charm, and a populist touch that few can match. He also has quite a reputation as a bon viveur.

In 1992 Saarland's parliament discovered that he was paying himself a state pension, at the age of 48, on top of his salary as prime minister. Mr Lafontaine was forced to spin a convoluted fable about cash flows and his high cost of living in order to escape censure.

His tastes might be expensive, but his origins and politics are humble. The son of working-

class parents, the new SPD leader is on the left of the party, embodying the blue-collar values that are finding ever fainter echoes in the 1990s. As German industry migrates to rural regions in the south or exports jobs to cheaper countries in Europe, the ranks of the class-conscious working class are dwindling. Even in his native Saarland, Mr Lafontaine's most noted recent achievement is the profitable conversion of a derelict foundry into a theme park.

His leftist leanings have been seized upon by Mr Kohl's party as an electoral liability. "With the election of Oskar Lafontaine, the SPD is leaving the political centre ground," commented Peter Hintze, the Christian Democrats' general secretary.

But economic reality has tempered Mr Lafontaine's socialist zeal, and he has proved adept at toning down some of the rhetoric. In foreign affairs, he remains firmly on the left, however. His passionate argument against the use of German warplanes in the Bosnian peace-keeping mission earned him loud applause on Wednesday.

Mr Lafontaine's misgivings about European monetary union were not so well received. As the Christian Democrats have warned, the new leader "will whip up passions" about the common currency, even in the teeth of bitter protests from the party's Euro-wing.

Whether he resorts to the populist tricks Mr Kohl fears re-



Photograph: AFP

Tête-à-tête: The new SPD leader, Oscar Lafontaine (right) with Rudolf Scharping, whom he ousted yesterday

mains to be seen. The SPD leader might have learned the lessons of the 1990 general elections, when his chauvinistic campaign against German reunification was swept aside by the voters. Mr Lafontaine, then the SPD's candidate against Mr Kohl, added up the sums and proclaimed that East Germans would cost a lot more to West German tax-payers than the conservatives were admitting. Ultimately, he was proved right, but that was long after Mr Kohl romped home in triumph.

The memories of that fatal misjudgement of the nation's mood are still vivid. After 13 years in the wilderness, the Social Democrats would be loath to suffer another defeat in three years' time and are therefore keeping their options about Mr Kohl's next challenger open.

That task may yet fall to Gerhard Schröder, the strutting prime minister of Lower Saxony, who does not disguise his burning ambition to take on Mr Kohl. Whether he gets the chance or not, from now on the going will get a lot tougher for the Chancellor, and life in the SPD will be a lot more interesting.

Pilot scheme has chauvinist overtones

Ezer Weizman is "perhaps" a male chauvinist, he acknowledges, but has no regrets about his criticism of Israeli government policies. Described as moving "from figurehead to hammer head", the 71-year-old President has been getting into a few scrapes lately. His latest was with Alice Miller, a soldier who won a legal battle to become a military test pilot.

Mr Weizman, himself a former fighter pilot, says he didn't mean to offend her when he called her "Maelele" — "Misy" in Yiddish — and wondered if she had ever seen a man darning socks. Asked on television if he was a chauvinist, he replied: "Perhaps, perhaps," adding, "I think there is some criticism I need to take to heart, and I will take it to heart."

The pilot issue has long been a Weizman bête noire. Asked

PEOPLE



Pele: Rare opinion-maker

several years ago why Israel had no female air force pilots, he proclaimed: "The best men to the cockpit, the best women to the pilots."

The President, whose role is largely ceremonial, has been critical of Israel's peace agreements with the Palestinians. "I thought the pace was too fast. I felt duty-bound to say so."

The Tourism Minister, Uzi Baran, thinks he should simply shut up.

"Weizman is president for better and for worse," Mr Baran said. "For a long time, it has been for the worse."

Pele is a rarity among black Brazilians: an opinion-maker.

Now the sports minister and retired football star wants to spur others to do something about a country in which blacks are prominent in sport and entertainment but not in gov-

ernment and the military. To improve their lives, he told the newspaper *Jornal do Brasil*, black Brazilians must alter the racial make-up of Congress.

"If the black man wants to improve his social level, he

must put our people in Congress, people who will defend our race and resolve our problems," he said.

"On the other hand," Pele added, "the lack of black congressmen has a good side, in that today politicians have a bad reputation of being corrupt. At least blacks don't carry that burden."

The kidnapping of Rigoberta Menchu's cousin's baby has been solved. Guatemalan police have arrested the child's mother, Cristina Menchu Zapeta, and husband, Miguel Velasquez Lobos, for abducting their own son on 4 November in an extortion attempt.

Police say the couple had asked Ms Menchu, the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize winner and human-rights campaigner, for a loan but she had refused them.

Maryann Bird

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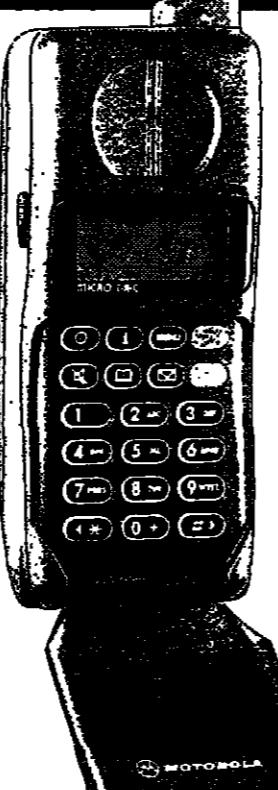
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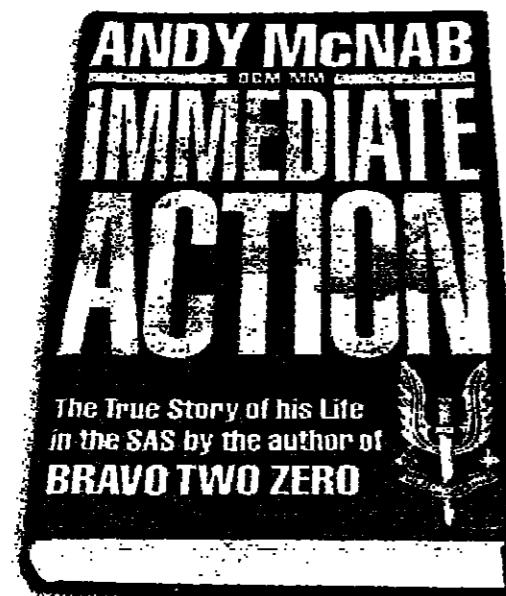
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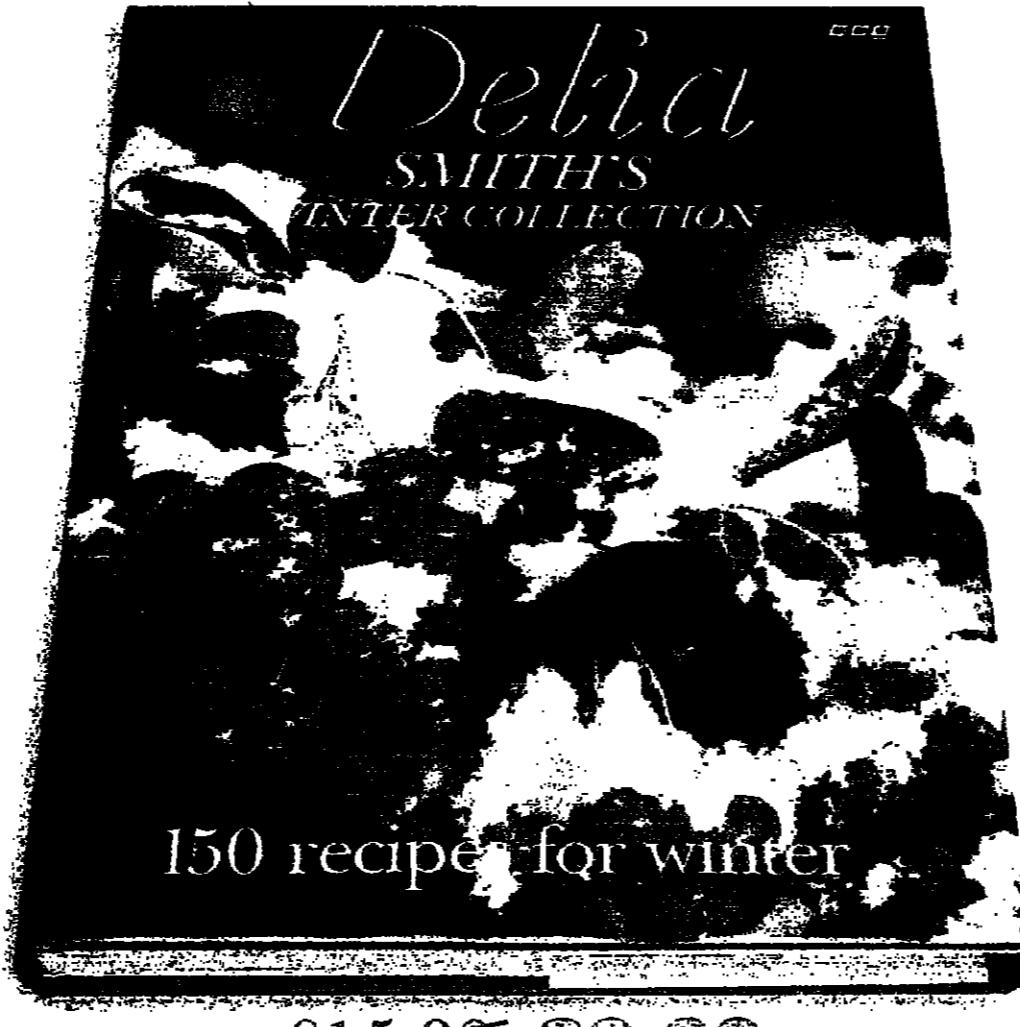
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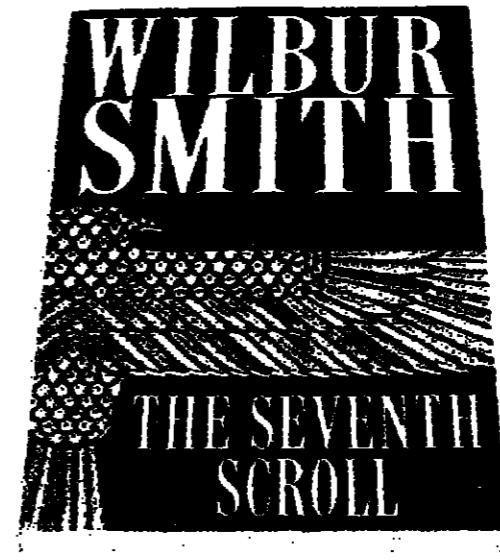
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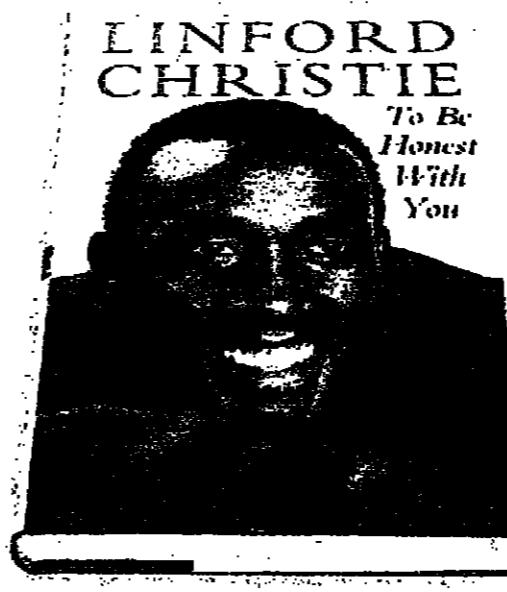
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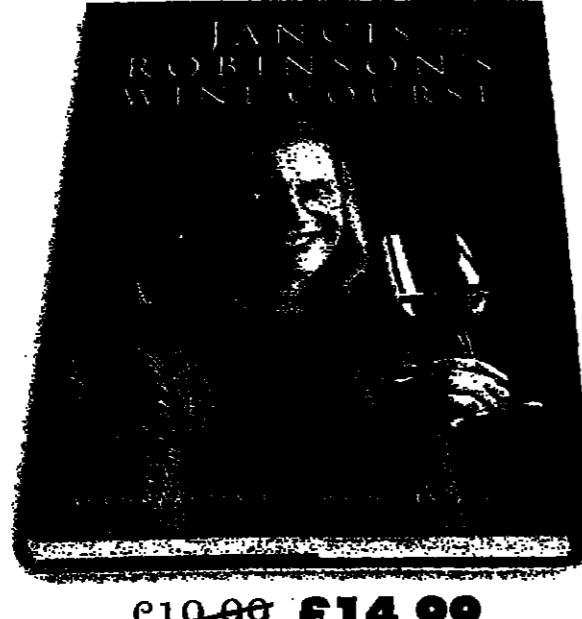
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The people of the Niger Delta would certainly suffer - the thousands who will work on the project, and thousands more who will benefit in the local economy.

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Whatever you think of the Nigerian situation today, we know you wouldn't want us to hurt the Nigerian people. Or jeopardise their future.

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WHILE YOU'RE TRYING TO SAVE THE BRAZILIAN RAINFOREST THE BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE IS DISAPPEARING.

Every year, charities in Britain spend millions of pounds to halt the destruction of the Brazilian rainforest. An important task yet, on the other hand, we seem oblivious to the effect modern development continues to have on our own countryside. According to the Council for the Protection of Rural England, in the last fifty years an area of Britain the size of Greater London, Berkshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire combined has disappeared under the relentless tracks of the bulldozer. On current projections an area the size of Greater London will continue to disappear every ten years. Our picture shows the Yorkshire Dales where of course, planning restrictions currently prevent development. But how long can even such beautiful parts of the country survive? It's time for us all to say enough is enough. But how? By supporting The Countryside Movement. Because urban encroachment is one of the many reasons

for its establishment. Our job will be to give a voice to the countryside, and to represent the five million or so people living and working in rural Britain. We will also speak for millions of people living in Britain's towns who nonetheless recognise the countryside as our greatest national asset. It will be constructive. For example, we in The Countryside Movement recognise that crucial new development, especially where it means new jobs, inevitably means the loss of some of our countryside. But we will also be putting the case strongly for proper redevelopment of derelict land in inner city areas. We will also promote good practice in all aspects of country life and aim to foster better awareness and understanding of the countryside among visitors and the public as a whole. Fundamentally, The Countryside Movement believes that those who live and work in the countryside are best qualified to look

after it. And that for far too long their collective voice has gone unheard amid a crescendo of demands and protests from a tiny minority of the well intentioned but ill informed. If you share this view, what should you do? If you believe that Britain's countryside is a precious part of our national life, and something that should be valued and preserved, then show your support for The Countryside Movement. Fill in the coupon or phone 0117 976 8900. There are no subscription fees. Just the right to make your voice heard.

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JULY 1995

Trial of the century: The main player now cuts a sorry figure but the supporting cast is wheeling and dealing with a vengeance

After OJ, the cash still goes round and round

JOHN CARLIN
Washington

Are Marcia Clark and Christopher Darden, the black-and-white prosecutors in the OJ Simpson trial, having an affair? Will they walk down the aisle together? Or is Darden "seeing" Anita Hill? Will OJ's girlfriend, Paula Barbieri, have him back? Will any woman take him? Who scored the bigger book deal: Johnnie Cochran, OJ's defence lawyer, or Ms Clark?

For all the best efforts of Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich to focus national attention on the budget, it is these and other questions that continue to agitate the celebrity-mad public. "Juicewatch", the tabloid soap opera, just runs and runs.

Some of the questions have been answered. Some still linger, as unresolved as the murders of Nicole Brown and her friend Ronald Goldman. Ms Clark and Mr Darden were seen on holiday together at the Lake Tahoe resort a few days after the trial. They were photographed coming out of a Los Angeles hotel. So they might have been involved. But sadly, no, they are not getting married. Ms Clark said during a speech at a women's conference in Long Beach, California, on Tuesday that she "burst out laughing" when she read the report in a supermarket tabloid.

But yes, according to sources at the William Morris talent agency, their client Mr Darden is engaging in consenting sex with Anita Hill, a law professor from Oklahoma who leapt to fame a few years back when she accused Clarence Thomas, the Supreme Court judge, of sexu-



Close encounter: Prosecution and defence lawyers crowd together during the OJ trial. From left: Johnnie Cochran, Marcia Clark, Robert Shapiro and Christopher Darden

al harassment. William Morris has an interest in perpetuating the Darden mystique, for they helped him sign a publishing deal worth \$1.3m with HarperCollins: a nice sum but \$2.9m less than Ms Clark secured from Viking for her book.

Mr Cochran has also signed up for a book: *My Journey to Justice*. He has obtained "a very substantial multi-million dollar deal". But his refusal to specify just how much he is getting suggests he is miffed at Ms Clark for having lost the legal battle but winning the Battle of the Books. Alan Dershowitz, another lawyer of the Simpson "Dream Team", is picking up a mere \$500,000 for *Reasonable Doubts*, a book he says will be of an academic bent.

OJ, meanwhile, is cutting a rather sorry figure. He has

been kicked out of his favourite golf club; he has been dumped by his agency, Creative Managements; he continues to be bombarded with death-threats;

he still faces ruin in pending "wrongful death" civil suits brought by the Brown and Goldman families; no one has yet made him an offer to write

a new book; and last weekend he endured the ignominy of being told to stay away from a sports memorabilia convention

hoping to sell autographed photographs, at \$159.95, of the highway pursuit that preceded his arrest in June 1994.

The word is that OJ spends

most of his time at his Los Angeles home doing nothing – and alone. Ms Barbieri, a 28-year-old *Playboy* and underwear model, dumped him live on

ABC television a couple of weeks back. She said she had stayed celibate during OJ's imprisonment but was disappointed in her hopes that he would return a better person. What did it, she said, was his proposal that they should sell photographs of their reunion to the highest tabloid bidder.

"It was all of a sudden. Well, they'll play lots of money for pictures of you and I together," Ms Barbieri told ABC. "And then the next thing I know he's coming. And he's got the photographer with him."

In case anyone has failed to get the moral of the OJ story, that money in America is everything, here's the quote of the year from Ms Barbieri's brother, Michael.

Angry that his father and half-brother were paid to appear on television but that he had missed out, he told *People* magazine when they refused to cough up for an interview: "I'm not going to stab my sister in the back for nothing."

IN BRIEF

Roh arrested on kickback charges

Seoul — Roh Tae Woo, the disgraced former South Korean president, was arrested yesterday on charges of pocketing more than £195m from business tycoons in return for lucrative contracts. More arrests were expected.

Mr Roh, the country's first former or current head of state to be charged with a crime, was pelted with eggs and vilified by demonstrators as he was driven to the Seoul detention house. Minutes earlier, Mr Roh apologised to the nation on the steps of the Seoul prosecutor-general's office. "I'm really sorry," he said. "I will take all responsibility and any punishment."

A 1,000-page arrest warrant said 30 tycoons gave kickbacks to Mr Roh worth 500m won (£420,000) to 25bn won (£21m), a district court judge said.

Reuter

US Attorney-General has Parkinson's

Washington — The Attorney-General, Janet Reno, disclosed that she has Parkinson's disease. She said the brain disorder is not adversely affecting her work and that she will remain at her job. "I'm taking my medicine. I feel fine now," Ms Reno, 57, said. Her only symptom has been trembling in her left hand, which she noticed last summer. The disease results from the death of brain cells that produce a substance called dopamine and use it to send signals from the brain throughout the body.

AP

Slovakia bans use of other languages

Bratislava — Parliament has passed a strict language law curtailing the use of any language other than Slovak and providing large fines for anyone contravening it. The move heightened tensions with the country's sizeable Hungarian minority. The CTK Czech news agency said that the measure would take effect some time next year.

AP

Sri Lankan army prepares for final attack

Colombo — Sri Lankan troops halted their advance one kilometre from the Tamil rebel stronghold of northern Jaffna City and prepared for a final assault, military officials said. The army will rotate troops and consolidate positions during the next few days, the officials said. But they refused to disclose when troops were likely to move on the city.

AP

No graven image

Annan — King Hussein of Jordan had a statue of himself (left) removed yesterday, hours before it was to be unveiled. Using a crane, workers lifted the statue out of a public square opposite the prime ministry building before dawn. There had been widespread criticism from Jordanians who saw an uncomfortable parallel with glorification of leaders in Iraq and Syria. "The king was unhappy with it and ordered its removal," said an official of the Amman municipality, which called the monument a 60th birthday tribute. Reuter

Saudi dissident 'not welcome in Britain'

London — A Saudi dissident who was quoted yesterday as having said US soldiers killed in a bomb attack in Saudi Arabia were "a legitimate target" is not welcome in Britain, the Foreign Office said. The Middle East Mirror reported Mohammed al-Masari, leader of the Committee for Defence of Legitimate Rights, as having made the remark, according to Foreign Office officials. "I said Mr Masari said his remarks were taken out of context. 'I said it was the perception of the common man [in Saudi Arabia] that they [US troops] are a legitimate target.' Reuter

Free-trade goal for Asia-Pacific

Osaka — Asia-Pacific ministers adopted a blueprint for regional free trade over the next quarter century. Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation ministers unanimously adopted an "Action Agenda" outlining how to achieve their aim of regional free trade by 2020.

Reuter

MEPs call for oil embargo on Nigeria

Strasbourg — The European Parliament urged the European Union to impose an oil embargo on Nigeria to put pressure on its military rulers following the executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists last Friday. The MEPs also called for a freeze on European bank accounts of Nigerian leaders, as well as a sports boycott.

Reuter

Former French minister jailed for gifts

Lyons — A French court sentenced Alain Carignon, a former communications minister, to five years in jail, two of them suspended, on corruption charges. Carignon was convicted for accepting gifts from Lyonnaise des Eaux in return for a water privatisation contract in Grenoble when he was mayor.

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Rabin investigation: Lax security exposed as Yigal Amir demonstrates how he shot Israeli Prime Minister

Killer with a smile re-enacts assassination

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

Protected by a white bullet-proof vest, Yigal Amir rushes up to a man wearing a paper tag reading "Yitzhak Rabin" and pretends to shoot two bullets into his back. The policeman playing the role of the murdered prime minister crumples to the ground just like the real Rabin did on the night of 4 November.

"You killed Rabin, you piece of garbage," shouts an Israeli watching the re-enactment of the assassination by the back steps of Tel Aviv city hall early yesterday.

Police hold back another man trying to break through their barricade who yells: "You should have protected the prime minister like this."

Mr Amir pays no attention but, like a stage director, pushes policemen into the places where he remembers people were standing moments before he fired 12 days previously. Everyone except for a single bodyguard – 20 Shin Bet security agency guards were meant to be protecting Rabin that night – is ordered back.

When Mr Amir is satisfied that everybody is in position the policeman in a red check shirt who plays Rabin starts to bow his head to get into a limousine, the door of which is opened. As he does so Mr Amir moves smartly forward into a wide open space behind him and his right arm goes up as he points a toy gun at Rabin's back.

Police re-enactments of crimes are common in Israel but the demonstration by Mr Amir underlines the chronic failure of Israeli security. Earlier Mr Amir pointed out to police the public phones behind the steps where he waited for hours for Rabin to leave the platform where he was addressing people at a peace rally.

At 3am, when the re-enact-

ment took place, there are not many people in the streets of Tel Aviv; those who did watch were kept well back. The ferocity of the invective – "Take off your kippa [skullcap], you dog!" shouted one onlooker – shows the depth of the anger felt by many Israelis over the killing. At one point Mr Amir appeared to grin at the abuse.

The Shin Bet security service and the police are still fighting over who is responsible for letting Mr Amir get a clear shot at Rabin. In theory the Shin Bet has taken full responsibility for intelligence and operational failures. But it has also revealed that the head of Rabin's security detail had told the police officer in charge on the night of the assassination that there were not enough men

Harmony Street

Jerusalem (AP) – A Hebrew-Arabic adaptation of Sesame Street will bring conflict resolution to Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Children's Television Workshop said yesterday the programme will include Israeli segments produced in Tel Aviv and Palestinian segments produced in east Jerusalem.

"We're thinking about having two Sesame Streets, an Israeli street and a Palestinian street, and the possibility of some in-between no man's land where the characters might meet," said Deoud Kuttab of the Jerusalem Film Institute. He said the segments would not always bring Israeli and Palestinian children together, but that "we are breaking much new ground with what we are doing."

Roberta Fahr, an Israeli consultant to the project, said that all of the international Sesame Street productions, this would be the first addressing a specific conflict.

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guarding the steps down which the prime minister was about to walk. The police officer replied: "Don't tell me what to do."

Violence is still not far below the surface despite back-peddling by militant rabbis who had previously denounced Mr Rabin as a traitor. Rabbi Nahum Rabinovitch, who runs a military-theological college with 200 students at Ma'ale Adumim settlement to the east of Jerusalem, while denying allegations that he set the stage for Rabin's death, is recommending to his students that they plant mines if Israeli soldiers try to remove settlers from the West Bank.

In a tape-recording made by an orthodox moderate named Yitzhak Frankenthal and later published in the Israeli press, Rabbi Rabinovitch says that if soldiers come to uproot settlers he intends "to scatter the area with roadside bombs like the Arabs do". Asked about Israeli soldiers who might be killed by the mines, Rabbi Rabinovitch says that only "evil men" would obey orders to evacuate settlements.

Dror Adani, one of eight suspects under arrest as possible members of the conspiracy to kill Rabin, said yesterday he had been sent by Mr Amir to a rabbi to get authorisation to kill the prime minister. He says the rabbi turned him down but it is not known if Mr Amir was able to get the required blessing from another one of Israel's 5,000 orthodox rabbis.

Shimon Peres, the acting prime minister, says he will also take over as Defence Minister when he announces his new cabinet next week, Israel radio reports. This means that Ehud Barak, the former chief of staff, will take over as Foreign Minister. The Defence Ministry will play a critical role in organising the redeployment of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities on the West Bank.

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Violence is still not far below the surface despite back-peddling by militant rabbis who had previously denounced Mr Rabin as a traitor. Rabbi Nahum Rabinovitch, who runs a military-theological college with 200 students at Ma'ale Adumim settlement to the east of Jerusalem, while denying allegations that he set the stage for Rabin's death, is recommending to his students that they plant mines if Israeli soldiers try to remove settlers from the West Bank.

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Dror Adani, one of eight suspects under arrest as possible members of the conspiracy to kill Rabin, said yesterday he had been sent by Mr Amir to a rabbi to get authorisation to kill the prime minister. He says the rabbi turned him down but it is not known if Mr Amir was able to get the required blessing from another one of Israel's 5,000 orthodox rabbis.

Shimon Peres, the acting prime minister, says he will also take over as Defence Minister when he announces his new cabinet next week, Israel radio reports. This means that Ehud Barak, the former chief of staff, will take over as Foreign Minister. The Defence Ministry will play a critical role in organising the redeployment of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities on the West Bank.

At 3am, when the re-enact-

ment took place, there are not many people in the streets of Tel Aviv; those who did watch were kept well back. The ferocity of the invective – "Take off your kippa [skullcap], you dog!" shouted one onlooker – shows the depth of the anger felt by many Israelis over the killing. At one point Mr Amir appeared to grin at the abuse.

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obituaries/gazette

Professor Ian Gregor

Ian Gregor was an acute literary critic but rarely an assertive one. The best of his work focused on the paradoxes and ambiguities of Modernism as he himself broadly conceived it – a self-conscious, exploratory mode traceable back to the great Victorians.

He had an instinctive relish for the internal conflicts of that movement, the tensions between realism and formalism, self-absorption and social concern, faith and doubt. His favourite writers, who included Arnold and Hardy, Woolf, Forster and Eliot, William Golding and Graham Greene, worked along and across the fault-lines of our age. He saw them as struggling on behalf of us all. Readers had a corresponding responsibility to be attentive, to query sympathetically, to compare notes. Writing, reading, criticism were a shared activity, a Common Pursuit.

In that sense he was true to the spirit of F.R. Leavis, a critic he greatly admired. It was never his way to step back and pronounce judgement. Rather he would submit himself to what he read, and offer his own responses as contributions to continuing debate. Typical is an introductory sentence in *The Great Web* (1974), his sensitive study of Hardy's fiction: "What is a Hardy novel, what does it feel like to read, why does it take the form it does – these are the questions that shape what I have to say."

If that approach lacked the provocativeness which excites academic notoriety it sponsored rewarding intellectual exchange at every level. Gregor was widely known and respected in the profession, both in Britain and in the United



Gregor: the whole keyboard

don, Edinburgh and finally the University of Kent, where he was a founder-member of the English Board. Somewhere along the route he acquired a notable urbanity of manner, slightly episcopal in timbre, as befitting his Catholicism. But within that carriage lurked a practical joker, a raconteur, a Geordie, a devoted Newcastle United fan, Bevan boy who had spent three years in the pits. Comfortable in any company, he would never have balked at introducing Jackie Milburn to Virginia Woolf.

As an educationist perhaps his greatest strength was something that would elude the current X-ray tests of Audit, Assessment and Appraisal. He fostered a sense of community and a sense of occasion. His personality was a strong field of force: any group to which he belonged would become a team, evolving its own style and traditions and private jokes. When Kent was a New University, Ian Gregor made a crucial contribution to the development of its distinctive and congenial ethos.

Michael Irwin

Ian Copeland Smith Gregor, literary critic and teacher; born Newcastle 20 January 1926; Assistant Lecturer, King's College London 1956-58; Lecturer, Edinburgh University 1958-65; Senior Lecturer, University of Kent 1965-69; Professor of Modern English Literature 1969-88 (Emeritus); books include The Moral and Story (with Brian Nicholas) 1962, William Golding: a critical study (with Mark Kinkead-Weekes) 1967, Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy: a critical edition 1971, The Great Web: the form of Hardy's major fiction 1974; died Canterbury 13 November 1995.

Ivan Mandy

Ivan Mandy was one of the most widely read Hungarian writers of the post-1945 period. His popularity stemmed partly from his subject-matter, which was invariably the life of the inhabitants of the poorer districts in Budapest.

Mandy's stories evoke the atmosphere of a partly submerged world, that of old cafés, dilapidated cinemas, unkempt football stadiums. These are the backdrops to the actions of his marginal characters, sometimes with evocative names or nicknames, who lead haphazard, disorganized, or abandoned, lonely lives. Some of these stories barely have a plot, but Mandy is a master of evocative prose: with only a few words he is able to give the reader a strong "impression" of his characters.

Mandy was born in Budapest in 1918. After the divorce of his parents he stayed with his father, a journalist of Bohemian inclinations and much of his writing is based on the experiences of these early years. He attended various schools in Budapest but did not complete his secondary education. He made his debut during the Second World War with the novel *Csoszás* ("The Park-keeper's Hut", 1943), but it was only some years later with *Francia kúles* ("Adjustable Spanner") and *A huzsagyedik uca* ("The Twenty-first Street"), both published in 1948, that he was ac-

cepted as a remarkable new voice in Hungarian literature.

In the same year he won the Baumgartner Award. As he was co-editor of the independent and apolitical literary review *Ujhelyi* ("New Moon") until its suppression in 1948, in the first years of Communist rule he had difficulty in getting his work published. His situation began to improve in the mid-Fifties when, after years of marginalized existence, he once again got contracts; first he could publish fiction only for young readers, but his novel *Fabulya feleségei* ("Fabulya's Wives", 1959) showed his real potential. This was a satirical piece of the life of Bohemia and, mainly for political reasons, unemployed intellectuals in the 1950s.

Throughout the 1960s Mandy's popularity grew with collections such as *A paty szélen* ("By the Touchline", 1963) and *Az ordog konyhája* ("The Devil's Kitchen", 1965), which show a certain shift from impressionism towards a kind of nostalgic Surrealism. It was in these years that one could already detect a special "mien" in the writing of Mandy's prose. In the 1970s he wrote and published much; almost every year a new book of his reached the bookshops.

Mandy wrote a number of film scenarios, as well as plays for the radio, and won many literary awards. Some of his stories were translated into English and appeared in the anthologies *Ocean at the Window* (1980) and *Hungarian Short Stories* (1983). In 1992 he was made an Honorary Citizen of Budapest.

George Gomori

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Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

LIFE-BARRIER: Rear-Admiral John Lee-Barter, CBE, DSO (age 81). Peacefully in Hampshire on 14 November 1995, aged 81. Beloved father of Victoria and Sarah. Private cremation. Memorial service at St Mary the Virgin Church, Wivenhoe, Essex, on Monday 15 January 1996 at 2pm.

Announcements for **BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS** (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Weddings, Anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the **Editor, The Independent**, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephone 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012); faxed to 0171-293 2012; and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

Lectures

National Gallery: Tom Parsons, "Twilight (ii); Uccello's *The Battle of San Romano*", 1pm.
Tate Gallery: Tania String, "Dynastic politics of Tudor dynastic pictures", 1pm.
British Museum: Helen King, "Mermaid, Captain and Sirens: exploring the limits of humanity", 1.15pm.
Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1: Professor Heather Couper, "How Big is Space?", 1pm.
Oxford University (Herbert Spencer Lecture, Zoology/Psychology Building): Professor M. Le Doeuff, "Women and Intellectual Work", 3pm.

Anniversaries

Birth: Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, scientist and mathematician, 1717; August Ferdinand Möbius, as-

tronomer and mathematician, 1790; George Grote, historian, 1794; Field Marshal Sir Edward Montagu, 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, 1887; Deaths: Sir Margaret, Queen of Scotland, 1393; Catherine II, the Great, of Russia, 1796; François-Auguste Rodin, sculptor, 1917; Arthur Eric Rowton Gill, stone-carver, engraver, typographer and author, 1940; Heitor Villa-Lobos, composer, 1959; Ernest Hamilton Childs, president of Ireland, 1974; On this day: Elizabeth I acceded to the throne of England, 1558; the first Battle of the Somme ended, 1916; Kashmir voted to become part of India, 1948; the first London performance of the musical show *Godspell* was presented, 1971. Today is the Feast Day of Saints Acutius and Victoria, Saints Alpheus and Zachaeus, St Ansarius of Arigna or Orleans, St Dionysius of Alexandria, St Elizabeth of Hungary, St Gregory of Tours, St Gregory the Wonderworker, St Hilda of Lindisfarne and The Martyrs of Paraguay.

Birth: Charles Mackerras, conductor, 72; Sir Charles Murphy, director, 70; Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, composer, 70; Sir Ronald Maxwell-Hubbard; Dr John Crook; Mr Stanley Prokofiev; Dr David Damant; Mrs Malcolm Carter.

Death: Lord Templeman; Lord Taylor of Goodrington; Mr and Mrs James Morris; Sir Ian Gladwell; Lord Justice Hirst; Lord Justice Phillips; Mr Justice Waterhouse; Mr Justice Munro; Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Kipps; Mr Ronald Macmillan; Mr Raymond Wheately-Hubbard; Dr John Crook; Mr Stanley Prokofiev; Dr David Damant; Mrs Malcolm Carter.

Birth: Sir Peter Maxwell-Davies, 70; Mr Martin Sorrells, film director, 53; Miss Debbie Thrower, broadcaster, 38; Mr James Warwick, actor, 48; Mr Auberon Waugh, journalist, 56; Mr John Wells, writer and actor, 59; Miss Joyce Wethered (Lady Heathcote Amory), golfer, 94.

Death: Mr Oliver Lodge, Treasurer, Lincoln's Inn, held a dinner yesterday evening at the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, London WC2, in cel-

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Lord and Lady Llewellyn; Lord Templeman; Lord Taylor of Goodrington; Mr and Mrs James Morris; Sir Ian Gladwell; Lord Justice Hirst; Lord Justice Phillips; Mr Justice Waterhouse; Mr Justice Munro; Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Kipps; Mr Ronald Macmillan; Mr Raymond Wheately-Hubbard; Dr John Crook; Mr Stanley Prokofiev; Dr David Damant; Mrs Malcolm Carter.

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Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party
The idea of sitting down at the same table as Sinn Fein is anathema to him. Opposes Dublin's involvement in talks about Northern Ireland. Would probably boycott round-table conference, at least initially.

Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein
Has called for immediate all-party talks. Says Britain only raised issue of decommissioning as a precondition after the ceasefire. Argues that no ceasefire in Irish history required surrender of weapons before comprehensive talks.

John Hume, leader of the nationalist SDLP
Says all party talks should start at once. Argues that the important issue is not whether the IRA still has arms, but whether they plan to use them. Is convinced that Sinn Fein is committed to peaceful politics.

David Trimble, leader, Ulster Unionist Party
The IRA would have to decommission arms, and perhaps disband altogether. But if the IRA surrendered even a few weapons, Trimble would come under heavy pressure from the British Government to join talks.

John Bruton, premier, Republic of Ireland
Ready for all-party talks now. Favours dropping the decommissioning precondition. Has proposed new approach whereby talks would go ahead six weeks after an international commission had established Sinn Fein's good intentions.

John Major, Prime Minister
Demands that the IRA begins to decommission weapons before Sinn Fein joins talks. Wants international commission to arrange terms for dealing with IRA's arsenal. But Government has backtracked before, could do so again.



Will they ever get round that table?

Is the once unthinkable now possible: a lasting peace without a political settlement in Northern Ireland? Jack O'Sullivan reports

Today more than 80 republican and loyalist prisoners will walk free from Northern Ireland's jails. Their early release shows how the peace process can still deliver results. But today's scenes will mask a dangerous reality: progress towards a political settlement, the vital underpinning of peace, is in deep trouble.

Fifteen months after the IRA laid down its arms, all-party talks look like no more than a distant hope. Britain will not sanction them until the IRA makes at least a token surrender of arms. The Provisionals have, in a rare public statement, refused point blank to make the gesture, leaving neither side with much room for manoeuvre.

Meanwhile, the relationship between the Irish Republic and Britain - the rock upon which a settlement could be built - has deteriorated of late. President Clinton's planned visit later this month to Belfast, Dublin and London may be abandoned and, in any case, holds little prospect of breaking through the impasse.

Worse still, there are signs

that guns and bombs are being taken from arsenals that have remained undisturbed for months. A week ago the Irish police discovered 1,700kg of explosives just across the border in the Republic. Police believe that the massive bomb was to be used in an attack on

It would be wrong to assume that frustration will persuade the IRA to unpack its Semtex

a security target in Northern Ireland.

Amid the political stalemate, is peace breaking down?

No, this is the immediate answer.

Last week's foiled bombing was not the work of the Provisional IRA, by far the best-armed republican element. The blame

has been laid on the military wing of Republican Sinn Fein, which broke away from the Provisionals in 1986. It is a small, insignificant group, which claims to be the guardian of purist, uncompromising republican ideals. The activities of this fundamentalist splinter group do not signal a general breakdown in the ceasefire, to which the IRA apparently remains committed.

But the fact that a bombing was even considered indicates a change in the atmosphere in Northern Ireland. A few months ago, as one republican remarked, even extremists would not have contemplated such a "spectacular". They would have feared being rounded up by the rest of the republican community for endangering potential gains from the peace process. Now, after such a long stalemate, the opprobrium is diminished. There seems to be less to lose. So does this mean it is only a matter of time before the Provisional IRA eventually takes up arms again?

There is certainly frustration among northern republicans. Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, speaks of the many changes since peace broke out. But, complain republicans, most are security measures that would have been ordered if the IRA had been defeated, rather than concessions to a supposedly potent force.

Many republicans feel that the potential gains envisaged one year ago have not been fulfilled. Twelve months ago Sinn Fein was on a roll. Albert Reynolds, the then Taoiseach, was at one with Gerry Adams and prepared to press Sinn Fein's case with London. In contrast, Mr Reynolds' successor, John Bruton, is far less friendly with Sinn Fein. He won nationalist plaudits by attacking London last weekend, but Mr Bruton is by instinct anti-republican. He wants to woo the Unionists and has as a consequence cold-shouldered Sinn Fein, thereby alienating Mr Adams.

It would, however, be wrong to assume that republican frustration is about to persuade the IRA to unpack its stores of Semtex. Mr Adams has demon-

strated no desire for a return to the killing. He seems to have accepted some time ago that military victory was not achievable in Ulster. Were he to lead his troops back into battle, he would lose whatever influence Sinn Fein has acquired over the past two years in Dublin and Washington.

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So, with the IRA likely to remain confined to barracks, can we stop worrying about a return to violence? Probably. It is now quite possible to imagine a lengthy period, perhaps even years, in which an absence of violence continues in Northern Ireland, despite a lack of political development. This is a prospect that few commentators would have predicted back in September 1994, when the IRA laid down its weapons. At

that stage most people, notably within the British government, thought the cease-fires would soon falter.

The receding threat of violence may indeed be allowing John Major the luxury of not pressing ahead quickly with developing a political settlement. His key concern right now may not be to bolster peace with political change but to make sure that talks begin only when conditions are right.

This is a delicate task. The history of all-party discussions in Northern Ireland is of boycott by at least some of the main players. And even if discussions do get going, they usually collapse in acrimony.

Mr Major has probably accepted that Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists would not attend an all-party conference, at least until it was well under way. But he must persuade David Trimble, the recently-elected leader of the more moderate Ulster Unionists, to come on board. Talks without him would be a waste of time.

It may therefore serve Mr Major's purposes to delay all-party talks as long as possible, so that Mr Trimble can be persuaded to join the process and stick with it.

All of this analysis suggests the slow rate of progress in Northern Ireland should not necessarily be seen as provoking a crisis in the higher reaches

The history of all-party discussions is of boycott by at least some of the major players

of the IRA and hence an outbreak of killing. But there is an important risk from delay. A peace that was not underpinned by political change would to some extent be unstable. There is a danger that it could be vulnerable to breakdown, brought about not by the IRA but by an unfortunate conjunction of events that had no single author.

Last summer, Ulster offered a glimpse of these dangers.

There were the riots over the early release of Private Lee Clegg, who had been convicted of murdering a Catholic joy rider. A head-on confrontation between nationalists and unionists followed about an Orange march through a Catholic part of Portadown. As disturbances escalated there, and in riots on Belfast's Ormeau Road, it was possible to see how Northern Ireland might once again descend, almost accidentally, into a spiral of violence.

Everyone knows that the last time communal disturbances got out of hand and turned into the Troubles, it took 25 years before all the participants stopped the killing. The risk of such an unplanned deterioration should, as much as the thinking of the IRA's military command, preoccupy those politicians who think they can delay settling Northern Ireland's constitutional future.

Wilkes's

Wilkes was not alone in giving a private cheer at Brian Mawhinney being sprayed with orange paint by Asylum Bill protesters outside the House of Commons. The video of the incident was apparently played more than 10 times over lunchtime by gleeful BBC staff at the nearby BBC Westminster Studios at Millbank. The chairman of the Conservative Party has few friends at the BBC after railing against the corporation for left-wing bias at the party conference, and some were said to be cheered up enormously by the video.

There may also have been a faint cheer from inside the Blue Bunker itself. All is not well inside Central Office since the arrival of the Ulster Hardman, who gathered his staff for a pep talk yesterday. Morale has plummeted, and the departure of Hugh Colver, the former head of communications, is regarded as a symptom of a deeper malaise.

Nor was there much sympathy in the Commons. One of those close to the chairman quipped: "He was overcome with emulsion."

John Ward, the Prime Minister's parliamentary private secretary, is an unassuming chap, who sits quietly in the background. But Wilkes hears he deserves a medal, and possibly the modern Russian equivalent of the Order of Lenin.

Ward was all that stood between Major and a monumental gaffe over the premature reports of the death of Boris Johnson.

Wilkes can now reveal the full story. Tory backbenchers were setting down for Prime Minister's question time when a paper went off in the chamber, belonging to Alan Duncan, Brian Mawhinney's parliamentary private secretary. The message came from Tim Collins, temporarily restored as head of communications at Central Office. It said the BBC was about to announce that the Russian president was dead and wanted a reaction from a minister.

Panic set in on the Conservative



backbenches. "We'll have to tell the Prime Minister," said some of the younger, more eager MPs. But Ward is made of wiser stuff. "It will put him off his stroke," he said, and refused to pass the message on. As a result, Major was not told and he was spared the reddest of red faces.

Major and Boris owe Ward one for that.

Wilkes has tried his best, kept debates going when nobody wanted to speak, put down planted questions for ministers, laughed at Major's jokes, and even voted for the blasted Government, but loyalty counts for nothing these days. The Backbencher of the Year Award has slipped by for another year. The word around the tearoom is that it will go next week to John Redwood, the unsuccessful challenger for Major's crown.

Perhaps next year Wilkes should throw his hat in the ring, if that's what it takes.

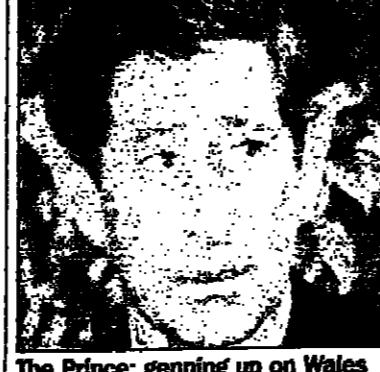
Wilkes always goes to the best parties, and the Nolan recommendations have done nothing to impinge on his convivial lifestyle. So it was that Wilkes was delighted to quaff champagne at Spencer House, the Princess of Wales's former family residence in St James's, for the 10th anniversary of a leading PR firm, the Communication Group. Guests included Alan Whicker, Labour's Doug Henderson and Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, whose former special adviser Jonathan Caine has joined the PR firm. Then it was over to the launch party for the collected essays of Norman Lamont, where Wilkes drank House of Commons claret and rubbed shoulders with the old gang, including Lord Parkinson and Sir Robin Day.

Wilkes is glad to report that Lamont has lost none of his gift for the well-turned phrase. Rejecting the range of figures showing the economy has turned belly-up, Lamont insisted that they were all wrong. "It's a false duck," he giggled.

Wilkes is a constitutional monarchist of the first order, in spite of the efforts by the Princess of Wales to advance the cause of republicanism. Wilkes needs to hear only two words - "President Thatcher" - to confirm his royalist instincts.

But there is a limit. Wilkes can put up with Prince Charles's watercolour of Windsor Castle signed "C '90" which greets visitors at the entrance to the MPs' offices at No 1.

Wilkes's old chum Lord Wakeham has been privately boasting that he has had an immediate effect on Fleet Street as the head of the Press Complaints Commission. He has closed down the telephone line set up by Sun hacks for dancing partners of Prince William to switch on his social activities now that he has started at Eton. The "snog line", as it was informally known (Wilkes cannot imagine why) was a breach of the boy prince's privacy, and thus Wakeham intervened.



The Prince: gassing up on Wales

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Beware a new wage spiral

How does a pay rise of 5 per cent sound to you? It is higher than inflation and well ahead of the average pay settlement. It is certainly better than the public sector will get this year. Yet once you stop to think about how much harder you are working, the new contracts which make your job less secure, the growing profits your company is making, and the soaring salary of the chief executive, then you might not feel it is unreasonable.

Your reaction matters a great deal to the economists who are watching the dispute at Ford over the management's pay offer of 4.75 per cent. If pay settlements start rising following the Ford example, we could be in for the wage boom that the Bank of England fears. But if the rest of the economy remains cautious and subdued, unaffected by the deals done at Dagenham, then pay and inflation could keep crawling along at their current rate.

In the past Ford's pay settlement mattered a lot. Wage increases at Ford used to be "the going rate" — they set the standard in the car industry and for the rest of manufacturing. But it would be surprising if the old situation still prevailed. Wage bargaining has become increasingly decentralised and the workforce less unionised. Pay setters in the service industries probably focus far more on their own profits and skill shortages than they do on manufacturing pay. And as employment in the service sector goes on rising, while employment in manufacturing continues to drop, then events at Ford matter that much less in the context of the whole economy.

Although Ford's pay packets may no longer be the trigger that causes rising wage bills across the economy, what happens there may still reflect the feelings of workers and management elsewhere. The Ford workforce is so fed up its members are prepared to strike for what they see as their fair share of the proceeds from productivity gains of the past few years — whether it be through wage rises above 5 per cent, or cuts in the working week in line with European colleagues. There could well be similar demands for wage rises across the economy which have been bottled up after several years of wage constraints.

Service-sector wages won't necessarily be immune to these pressures either. For although weekly earnings in the services remain subdued because there are so many part-time workers, hourly earnings for full-time workers have already been increasing at a rapid rate — 4.6 per cent in the year to last spring.

So just because the rest of industry and the economy no longer blindly follows Ford's lead, doesn't mean our pay is not about to start going up. The optimistic view is that the labour market has changed in such a dramatic way, that the old British wage inflation spirals have been defeated. The pessimists believe it is just a matter of time before old pressures resurface — wage claims could even start accelerating in the spring. The Bank of England is right to remain worried about wages, for it could take months, even years to be sure who is right. By which time it could be too late.

Keep fruit on our streets

Life must be hell for the man from the council. All those complaints from aggrieved tenants, noise-averse neighbours, unpruned owners of uncollected rubbish — so little time or money to deal with them. At least that's what they keep telling us. In which case, why has Derbyshire Council spent so much effort in getting a judgement against an Ilkeston greengrocer, against whose pavement display of fruit and vegetables no one had complained? The phrase "have they nothing better to do?" comes irresistibly to mind.

Ah, yes says Derbyshire, but it's not so simple. True, no one had objected to Brian Godfrey's sidewalk plums, and yes, there had been no accidents or incidents, but the law is the law. "Pavements are for people and have to be kept free of obstructions for the benefit of pedestrians", apparently.

This argument mirrors that of Camden and Westminster councils in London, when this summer's balmy heat brought the tables and chairs of dozens of bistros and cafés out onto the capital's grimy pavements. Justifying the imposition of a series of fines and the sequestrations of some offending furniture, Westminster's Robert Moreland declared himself to be acting on behalf of the partially sighted, disabled and pram pushers, forced to negotiate "unauthorised" tables and chairs (authorised ones, presumably emit a high-pitched noise to warn the partially sighted and fold down into ramps on the approach of wheelchairs or buggies).

There is much in Mr Moreland's

argument. There must indeed be some restriction on the rights of traders to take over the public's footpaths — even though there seems to be none on the rights of cable companies utterly to disrupt the ability of almost anyone to go almost anywhere. Café owners, greengrocers and stall-holders must be considerate towards pedestrians, and where real nuisance is caused must be restrained.

There is a sneaking suspicion, however, that what is at issue here is not so much public nuisance as an official desire to control everything. Mr Godfrey, as far as we can see, was causing no problem.

And lest we forget, Derbyshire council last featured in these columns when it instituted a policy of not employing smokers. It isn't just the Labour councils which seem to be prone to jobsworthiness.

As reported today, Tory Westminster is trying to insist that it is entitled to charge fruiterer Eric Carter for his pavement overspill — despite the fact that the space does not belong to the council. Their attitude appears to be that if something exists in public space, then they should get the benefit from it — or close it down.

Most people would like to see the growth of a lively (if regulated) pavement culture in Britain. The colour of fruit stalls and the hum of cafés is infinitely preferable to a dingy *mélange* of rubbish bins and cracked paving stones. Cars — parked and moving — are far more of a problem to pedestrians and street-users than any exuberant displays of artichokes. The man from the council should get his priorities right.

Lovely Rita, the prostitute who doesn't offer sex

Although I visit London at various intervals, or, to put it another way, as little as possible, I am still surprised by the amount of personal messages placed by people inside London phone boxes — announcements about a new Mexican girl in town, or busty Australian beauty, or Naughty Nina, and so on.

People who have mobile phones won't know about all this — indeed, people may well buy mobile phones for the single puritanical purpose of getting away from the constant array of prostitutes' cards they are forced to look at in phone boxes — but I know all about this, because every time I go innocently into a London phone box I suddenly get culture shock all over again.

But on my last visit to London I saw something quite different in a kiosk. I saw a prostitute's card which read as follows. "Rita promises you NO Hanky Panky! Hands off Rita! Keep your distance with lovely Rita! Ask for nothing and you won't be disappointed!"

This sounded a bit out of the ordinary. A girl who took your money and then didn't sell you her body.

Or was it code for something so recondite that I didn't even know about it?

I was intrigued.

I was so intrigued that I made a note of the number.

Let's be honest — I rang her there and then.

"I am doing a survey of London phone box cards," I improvised hastily when Rita answered the phone. "I was just wondering what sort of customer you were catering for."

"Why don't you come along and find out, sir?" she said, and gave me an address. "Bring a video if you like." Then she rang off.

I think if she had called me "darling" or "love", I wouldn't have gone along to see her. But being called "sir" reassured me. I felt safe. I went along to see her.

"Did you bring a video?" she said. "No matter. There's plenty of other things to do."

"What kind of video did you expect me to bring?" I said nervously. "Sex, you mean?"

"Don't be stupid," she said. "Football videos are what punters

normally bring. Wildlife documentaries are next popular. I draw the line at feature movies. They take hours."

"You mean — people can only have sex while their favourite TV programme is on?"

She stared at me.

"Sex? What are you talking about? They come here to get away from it."

Gradually, as she talked, the truth came out. Most prostitutes catered for men who had little or no sex life at home, but Rita catered for another minority — those who had too much, men who suffered from sexually demanding wives or who for some reason had gone off the whole thing.

"You'd be surprised how many

men are just settling down for a quiet evening with a book or the TV when they are dragged off to bed by a concupiscent wife," said Rita. "All they want to do is be left in peace and quiet."

"That's what I give them here. They bring round the programmes they've missed and watch them here, while I potter around doing the housework or sewing. There's one bloke who always brings his ironing round and likes to watch me do that, while we chat. Of course, I have to charge him extra."

"But football on video is the main choice of men. It's often on late at night, and they're dragged off to bed for sex by the wife at that time, so they tape it and bring it round here, and watch it as they would have liked to watch it. I've got several regulars who do that. Some games I see four or five times over. And I must always remember never to reveal the result if I know it in advance."

"Does she have to watch the programmes as well? Is that part of the deal?"

"No, not necessarily, although you do find the occasional man who

gets a real kick out of explaining football to a woman in technical terms. So many women obviously get turned off by sport that when the men say to me, 'Did you see the way he drew his man and created space there?' and I say, 'Very nice running off the ball, too' — one of the phrases I've picked up, don't know what it means — they go red with pleasure."

"But what they like best, if you can believe it, is for me to dress up in something very revealing or skimpy and come smooching past saying, 'Are you coming to bed with me?'"

"Why do they like that?"

"Because it gives them a chance to shout at me, 'Oh, go and take a jump in the lake,' or, 'I wouldn't go to bed with you if we were on a desert island together!' — all those things they've longed to say to their wives, but have never dared. At least they know that when they come to the door, they spend here they are quite free from sex."

"Funny old thing, human nature, isn't it?"

"I think she may be right."



MILES KINGTON

Photo: PA

comment

15

Auntie in a flap over the F-word

BBC guidelines are the closest we have to a new prayerbook, but heaven help the taste committees

The man from the BBC who looks after taste and decency projected a silent graphic on to the screen. He ran through it fast, but I did catch the top of the list of words with the percentage of the public who thought them totally unbroadcastable:

coot	74 per cent
george	70 per cent
m***sf***er	70 per cent
fee	55 per cent
neg***	55 per cent

What the BBC proved at its seminar on taste and decency this week is that examined too closely, too seriously, the subject is easily reduced to farce.

The BBC invited its leading critics to debate with programme controllers and governors for a whole day of filth and violence. Clips from Ben Elton's *Backup* and *Lady Chatterley* interspersed the discussions. For the battle over broadcasting standards represents the moral dilemmas argued over in every household, every newspaper, every pub. For lack of any other binding institution – no widely attended church, or any other generally accepted moral standard-bearer – the poor old BBC must bear the brunt of representing to society what it thinks of itself, what it thinks its standards are. BBC guidelines are the closest we have to a new prayerbook, and as a result the best battleground for all our moral anguish.

Having recently come from inside the walls of this sometimes monstrous, yet magnificent citadel, the internal discussions day after day were some of the most stimulating and intellectually absorbing but also sometimes the most mind-numbingly desperate nonsense. The burden of responsibility of a compulsory licence fee weighs heavily on BBC executives: £86.50 a year is a harsh poll tax on every household. It puts some of the

poorest into prison, for non-payment of fines – many of them people who barely watch the BBC and are positively hostile. It makes everyone jumpy, an organisation of panicky paranoics who quiver when the most mindless leader writer or backbencher says boo. Accused by many, including many at this week's seminar, as cultural imperialists, ivory tower dictators, arrogant and unaccountable, the truth inside is quite different.

Of course, the corporation arrived at the seminar well-armed with audience research showing how much more liberal attitudes towards sex on television have become in the past 10 years. The most conservative groups had shifted greatly, with older women moving from 33 to 41 per cent toleration of sex and nudity. Changing attitudes towards homosexuality were most marked, with a 20 per cent drop in the numbers who find it offensive.

However, the fact that the viewers' values are on the slide was certainly not going to mollify the moralists. One of them put the dilemma succinctly: if the broadcasters keep pumping out sex, nudity and rude words they themselves change public sensitivity. There is something devious about debasing the currency and justifying your behaviour by proving you are in tune with the people when you are a prime cause of the cultural shift you are measuring. If more and more gays on television acceptable now than 10 years ago, that must be in large part because in the past 10 years it has featured in virtually every soap.

What, someone asked, does the BBC think it is doing? Does it set moral standards and stick by them, does it follow whatever its polling says its viewers' standards are, or does it see itself in the forefront of positively setting out to change (and by implication liberalise) public opinion? This is tricky territory, since a simple "yes" to



POLLY TOYNBEE
The BBC is not
a pulpit, nor
is it a mere
crowd-pleaser

any of these is plainly both absurd and presumptuous. The BBC is not a pulpit, but nor is it a mere crowd-pleaser. It is not a slave to opinion polls, but an innovator and a leader, then of course it does have standards of its own, but try defining them and the eels slip through the fingers.

Fine words can cover a multitude of difficulties. From the director-general we had "eternal values, truth and quality, excellence of thought and execution." Eternal values? Good heavens, we have just had a presentation that shows there are none, with everything constantly on the move.

For many, the argument descends here into unsatisfactory greyness and murk. But the truth of the matter is murky. Bernard Manning, Jim Davidson or Ben Elton – who makes you laugh, and who offends you most? Taste is so impossibly personal that only the grossest trespassing on new territory draws a clear consensus. (There is far more agreement on violence.)

The moralists want everything clear-cut. News and Current Affairs, with their strict guidelines, scored well. How

much easier to make rules on how much blood, how many bodies, how much detail in the Rosemary West case. Though Martin Bell has been saying that he thinks television over-sensitises the horror of war, with all that banging of the guns and unrealistically one apparently blown to bits as a result. So even here there is some doubt.

But when it comes to drama and humour, the sands shift so fast beneath the feet. With heavy heart I heard one governor announce that the seminar showed the clear need for more guidelines to cover these grey areas. Heaven help the luckless teams of taste-formers who will sit on those committees. Canute-like, the BBC can try to defy the cultural waves of Tarantino or Stone, the Playboy channel and worse that flow from elsewhere with every tide. It can trim the worst blood and sex off Hollywood movies, but it cannot command the global culture of the ether.

The moralists will shake their heads and say, there you go again – this moral relativism takes us down the path to perdition. They see a steady decline in standards that can only lead to the sewer, though they never say where they would have stopped the clock. If they mean the golden year of 1952, year of coronation and conquest of Everest, perhaps we should have a night of programmes from that cultural desert of an era.

The moral panic model of society is on a slippery slope to the cesspit. But another model is a continuous line of change with some higher standards and some grosser vulgarisations. To be sure, *Blind Date* has become pornographic. *Don't Give Up The Day Job* is a humiliation too far, and *Lady Chatterley* was plain bad. But there is now little of the casually sexist, racist, homophobic beastliness of yesteryear, and the drama is unrecognisably more subtle and sophisticated.

Of course, the BBC tries to wriggle out of its unwelcome role as the nation's moral guardian and weather-vane. Sidestepping the trap of whether it is an opinion-former or opinion-follower, instead they talk of the fragmenting audience and the duty to give every licence-payer something indispensable.

Gone are the days when a nation sat down together to watch the same things at the same time. In other words, if you don't like the rude bits, make a cup of tea and watch the other side until the wildlife comes on.

However, forced to play the moral arbiter of our times, the BBC is doomed forever to abuse from every side, damned sometimes for cultural or political cowardice and damned sometimes when it is brave. Lame and tame, some say, while the Telegraph lauds into its dawning scoop of the year – the Diana interview on Monday's *Panorama*. *The nation's Auntie* is also the nation's Aunt Sally, since pleasing all the punters all the time is quite simply impossible.

Although losing some cultural power as channels proliferate, the BBC will always have schizophrenic obligations. Bring in the crowds, bring on the excellence, do those programmes that no one else will do and yet be popular. Please the uneducated, but please the same as the erudite, but please don't be vulgar or low.

So it is hardly surprising that whenever the BBC presents its face in public, it covers its confusion in enough high-flown nonsense to make a politician blush. Sanctimonious language will always be a BBC imperative: "Our responsibility is to ensure that all that we do is driven by a moral purpose which rests on the basic pillars of decency, rather than the shifting sands of taste." Well, bumbling. The BBC sits on the same sandbank of time as the rest of us.

The sins of admission

One of the great outlets for creative writing is about to be denied to the nation's 17-year-olds and their parents.

University vice-chancellors are planning to allow sixth formers to fill out their UCAS forms after A-levels, rather than months before. In a hyperactive fortnight between August and September they will offer places based on their real, rather than predicted, A-level grades.

But since when was dealing in realities part of filling out a university application form? A UCAS form should be a heady mixture of predicted grades and imagined lives.

Children who believed they had no flair for creative writing discovered untapped sources of fictional inspiration. Parents who had brought up their offspring to have regard for veracity and fair play reconciled themselves to being economical with the truth or having to keep an underwolf for the next three years.

I long for a national study by the British Psychological Society of one year's UCAS forms as it could tell us so much about 17-year-olds in Britain; little about their lives, but tons about their creative abilities. Rarely can so many people have spent so much time and effort writing about non-existent achievements, interests and nobility of character for the annual autumnal sport of pulling the wool over the eyes of what is enduringly the last bastion of innocence, naivety and gullibility remaining in Britain – university admissions offices.

May I help admissions tutors, those guileless men and women, by offering my services as translator for those enigmatic, extra-curricular phrases on the forms now pouring into their offices?

I am gregarious = I have sex quite often.

I am an avid reader = I don't read.

I play the violin = my mum made me have lessons when I was 11.

I play football = ditto my dad.

The whole thing is a charade, because 17-year-olds simply don't have the breadth of interest that universities so confidently expect. They are too busy taking exams, and too busy being 17. That means listening to records, going to parties, the pub, the cinema and the shops – passive, trivial and unpolluted activities that would turn an admission officer's stomach.

Seventeen-year-olds do not join amateur dramatic societies, work in hospitals in the evenings or take the Duke of Edinburgh Award on a rainy Saturday morning. They prefer to stay in bed or have fun, and if they're not going to have fun when they're 17, then when will they? As it happens, the only achievement that admissions

officers should take any note of are the ones they universally scorn: extra curricular achievements in school. To gain high office there and suffer the scorn of one's peers by working, or ingratiating yourself for it, takes real character.

In that regard, I was particularly shocked to read in the Independent/UCAS guide for university applicants some advice from an admissions tutor at my alma mater, the University of Kent. Urging applicants to list out-of-school activities, he said wistfully: "We don't care if you've been a milk monitor."

Why should such world-weary cynicism horrify me? Dear reader, I was a milk monitor.

We are dying breed, those of us who can dimly remember spilling that daily third of a pint over which ever pair of short trousers had annoyed us that morning. We few, we happy few, we banned of milk monitors. Could there have



DAVID LISTER

been a better preparation of university, nay for life?

There was early training in life skills as I used every ounce (let us stick with imperial measures) of a pint of my eight-year-old charm on the school secretary to get the job. The lining up of milk and distribution to an entire year group also demanded precocious leadership skills. And, what is more, the experience politicised me.

As a student a decade later, I marched on a demo from that same university which now harbours the anti-milk monitor reactionaries, to protest against the ending of school milk all together by the then education secretary one, Margaret Thatcher. "No milk from an old cow" was one of the more ingenuous banners I recall from that day.

So my advice to students as you fill out those forms is to be not so much economical as ludicrously extravagant with the truth.

And my advice to admissions tutors is ignore the lot, everything that is except the real, genuine and hard-won achievements, the sweat, toil and grovelling that result in the magic words "prefect" or "year head" or "house vice-captain." Those denote the future high-flyer.

Scratch any Cabinet minister and you will find a former milk monitor.

Paul Gregg and Jonathan Wadsworth advise Kenneth Clarke to take a penny or two off the lowest rate

The kindest cut for everyone

To murder an old adage, two things are certain in life: death and that Kenneth Clarke is going to cut taxes in the upcoming Budget. What we don't know is who will benefit from the tax cuts and by how much. They could be staged over several years. They could involve a penny or two off the basic rate of 25p, or even the abolition of inheritance tax. In such a highly charged political climate it is probably naive to hope that the nature of the tax cuts should fulfil any function other than picking up votes. But some kinds of tax cuts are a lot more desirable than others. And with possibly billions and billions of pounds at stake, it is worth engaging in the debate.

Increasingly people without work live in a home where no one else has a job



Photograph: Reuters

The real question is not tax cuts for the rich versus tax cuts for the poor; it is how you use tax cuts as a way of getting people back to work. For the growing numbers of working-age Britons who are dependent on benefits form a serious constraint on any government achieving its economic, social and tax objectives. Benefit expenditure on working-age claimants and their dependents rose from £19bn in 1978/9 to £45bn in 1994/5 – and spending has grown despite frequent attempts to scale back eligibility and reduce the real value of benefits.

So why has spending on benefits grown so fast? Part of the problem is the number of people who are out of work. But this isn't the whole story. Non-employment follows a familiar pattern, rising in recessions and falling in recoveries.

But the distribution of work has also changed. Increasingly people without work live in households where no one else has a job either – so there is no one with a wage to support the family, and everyone has to depend on benefits. The number of households with no earned income grew from 8 per cent in 1979 to 20 per cent in 1994. Even during economic recovery, the proportion of workless households

has scarcely fallen. What this means is that most of the new jobs created have gone to individuals living in households where another adult is already in work.

Once families end up on benefits, they have a harder and harder time getting off again. In the past, if your whole family was out of work, you would be quicker finding a new job than someone else who had other family to depend on. Now those in workless households take twice as long to find new work as those whose partners are in work. Benefit dependence has grown not because new families are having to claim benefits, but because those on benefits already are taking much longer to get off. In 1979 the typical workless family spent 18 months

on benefit before anyone in the family found a job. By 1994, this had risen to four-and-a-half years.

The core of the problem – according to a growing body of evidence from left and right – is that work increasingly does not pay. For the family out of work for several years is hardly better off when one of their members finds a job – largely because the wages available in the kinds of jobs they are usually able to get are so very low. For these "entry jobs" are incredibly bad value and are worth in real terms no more than they were in 1979. A third of entry jobs pay less than £4,000 a year and two-thirds less than £7,000.

Virtually none of the jobs that the unemployed are able to get pay wages that the average British worker would

recognise. Combine this with a benefit system designed for a different era, and the incentives to take these jobs are minimal.

Taxes make matters worse.

Astonishingly these entry jobs are still taxed at the introductory rate of 20p.

And government policies since 1992

have not only been regressive, they have added to the problem of lousy incentives to find work. Increasing council rents, the council tax, fuel tax increases in NI contributions and failures fully to update tax allowances have all reduced the gap between benefit incomes and low-paid work.

The question for Kenneth Clarke

at the end of this month is whether he can use his tax cuts where he failed with his tax increases, to help

down to 15p. We have a realistic possibility of achieving a 10p introductory rate after the next two Budgets.

Of course tax cuts alone aren't enough. For those on means-tested benefits such as Family Credit or Housing Benefit would lose most of this tax give-away in withdrawn benefits – unless withdrawal rates are lowered in line with the tax cuts over the £3,200 band range. Thus the marginal tax rates and the marginal benefit withdrawal rate can be cut, while take-home pay rises. This could create substantial improvements in work incentives without dragging more people into Family Credit.

Tax cuts are no panacea to end the growth of benefit dependence. However, combined with other initiatives currently being tried out by Peter Lilley at the DSS maybe, just maybe, Britain can get more for its tax cuts than a feel-good factor in the opinion polls. So, Ken, if you are going to cut taxes, do the right thing – cut the 20p rate, give tax cuts to everyone and help prise open the unemployment trap.

Paul Gregg and Jonathan Wadsworth are researchers at the Centre of Economic Performance at the London School of Economics.

by Tony Reeve and Steve Way



PLEASE HELP A LITTLE DONKEY IN DISTRESS



This is Barney, looking happy now after being rescued! Her feet had grown so long she was unwilling to walk and found it painful even to stand - her owner was convicted of failing to look after her properly.

Although we have rescued over 6,700 donkeys, there are still many donkeys in trouble who need our help. Please try to spare a little this Christmas to help us in our immense task of giving all our residents the food, love, care and attention they need.

Be Father Christmas to a donkey this year and help a donkey in distress!

Our administration costs amount to just under 6p in the £1, so any help you can give will provide direct help to the donkeys.

PLEASE HELP US TO HELP THEM

Please send donations to:

The Donkey Sanctuary, (Dept ET1),

Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 0NU

Tel: (01395) 578222

Enquiries to Dr E.D. Svendsen, M.B.E.

I enclose Cheque/Postal Order for £

Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss _____

Address _____

Post Code _____



Market Report: Insurers show the way

Investment: PowerGen's bid test

Industry View: Crossed lines at C & W

Market Report: Insurers show the way

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CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

MARKET SUMMARY						
STOCK MARKETS						
FTSE 100				Dow Jones		
Nikkei				Nikkei		
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	12.500 High	12.500 Low	Vol (M)
FTSE 100	3910.8	+3.4	+0.08	3913.4	3843.4	40
FTSE 250	2690.8	+3.8	+0.14	2691.3	2600.9	35
FTSE 350	1794.2	+1.1	+0.06	1794.2	1770.7	39
FT Small Cap	1943.2	+0.2	+0.01	1943.1	1878.5	34
FT All-Share	1769.4	+1.9	+0.11	1769.4	1465.2	38
New York	4961.8	+0.8	+0.01	4961.8	3745.5	24
Tokyo	7298.5	+2.8	+0.03	7293.0	14485.4	0.8**
Hong Kong	9367.7	-0.7	-0.07	9002.9	6867.9	41**
Frankfurt	22007	+14.6	+0.7	23120	19710	20**
Paris	18051	+300	+1.6	20723	17213	32**
Milan	9144.0	+82.0	+0.9	103110	89120	18**

*See Jones Index & Graph at 1330 hours **FT/SMP Week Index Total

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

FTSE 350 companies (including investment trusts)

Index	Price (\$)	Change (\$)	% Change	Price (\$)	Change (\$)	% Change	
Mirror Group	150	13	8%	Telestar House	225	1	0.4%
Cowle Group	232	16	7%	Inchcape	295	11	3.8%
Uld News	570	31	5%	Pearson	385	14	3.8%
Berkshire	157	8	5%	Low & Boyer	485	13	2.6%
Costa Vivali	191	10	5%	SmithWH	403	8	2.0%

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling**	UK medium gilt*	US long bond
0.65	4.75	7.41
0.75	5.25	7.71
0.85	5.75	8.01
0.95	6.25	8.31
1.05	6.75	8.61

*Bills maturing next month **Treasury bills

Money Market Rates		Bond Yields*	
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Bond (%)
UK	6.68	6.56	7.80
US	5.75	5.56	5.99
Japan	0.38	0.34	2.72
Germany	3.91	3.86	7.54
			7.08

*Benchmark indices

CURRENCIES							
£/\$				£/DM			
£/Y				£/Y			
Pound				Dollar			
Yesterday	Change	Year Ago		Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	
\$ (London)	1.5563	+0.02	1.5742	\$ (London)	0.8425	+0.02	0.8385
S (New York)	1.5570	+0.02	1.5745	S (Hong Kong)	0.8423	+0.02	0.8388
DM (London)	2.3535	+0.08	2.4534	DM (London)	1.0105	+0.07	1.0150
Yen (London)	159.005	+1.682	154.450	Yen (London)	122.22	+1.085	118.945
£ Index	82.6	unch	79.0	S Index	82.6	-0.2	94.78

**New York exchange rates and S New York £/DM rates

IN BRIEF

BCCI creditors in line for \$1.8bn payout

Over 250,000 creditors of the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) are set to share \$1.8bn of compensation if a Luxembourg court ruling on the payout plan yesterday is confirmed in December. Four former employees of BCCI withdrew their appeal against the proposed settlement for creditors yesterday and agreed to pay costs.

Further slide in Euro Disney shares

Euro Disney shares plunged a further 25p to 169p yesterday in the wake of the previous day's announcement of disappointing annual results. They were trading at 215p prior to the results, and have slumped by almost 70 per cent in the last two years. Some analysts believe that the share price could fall considerably further.

PowerGen signs £450m leasing deal

PowerGen has signed a £450m deal for the long term lease of two large power stations to Eastern Electricity, now owned by Hanson. The sale – under pressure from the regulator, Offer – will reduce PowerGen's earnings per share by up to 3 per cent per year. The agreement comes as PowerGen awaits the Government's decision on whether to refer its £1.95bn bid for Midland Electricity to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Investment column, page 24

Northwest Airlines fears hostile KLM bid

Northwest Airlines last night moved to protect itself from a hostile takeover by minority shareholder KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. As tensions between the two airlines grows, the Northwest board adopted a plan to stop any "coercive or unfair" takeover tactics. KLM, whose three board members voted against the plan, would now be forced to negotiate with Northwest's 11 other directors about a takeover. The US airline became suspicious when KLM assembled a war chest of more than \$3bn.

Persil chief named Unilever chairman

Niall FitzGerald is expected to earn in excess of £800,000 a year when he takes over as chairman of Unilever, the foods and detergents group, next year. Mr FitzGerald, 50, will succeed Sir Michael Perry who is retiring next August after 39 years with the group. Sir Michael was paid £819,000 last year, including a £132,000 performance related bonus. Mr FitzGerald is currently the head of Unilever's detergents division which was responsible for the Persil Power debacle. Unilever was forced to withdraw the detergent after tests proved it damaged clothes.

Welsh Water in electricity merger talks

South Wales Electricity is braced today for a meeting with Welsh Water, almost 10 days after the water company said it might bid for Swalec. The electricity firm said yesterday that it estimates the annual savings from a merger to be little more than £1m and that they would cost £1.1m to achieve. Swalec said it is willing to listen, but added: "We do not see how this could enhance shareholder value."

KKR to buy Reed Elsevier titles

K-H Communications Corporation, a subsidiary of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, said it reached a definitive agreement to buy 20 magazines published by Reed Elsevier. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Inflation plunge lifts rate hopes

PAUL WALLACE
and DIANE COYLE

in interest rates dropped out. However, the size of the fall came as a shock to the City.

So, too, did the decline in the underlying rate, which the markets had been expecting to rise to 3.3 per cent.

Altogether, the net effect of the changes in mortgage rates this year and last contributed two-thirds to the decline in the annual rate of headline inflation. Keen competition in the insurance market – buildings, contents and motor – contributed about a fifth to the fall. Seasonal food prices, which fell sharply in October, were the other main factor driving the annual rate down.

There was clear evidence that retailers, who pushed through margin increases in August and September, had been forced by consumer resistance to cut prices again.

Clothing and footwear, which had risen 3.9 per cent in September, dropped back by 0.2 per cent. Household goods, up 1 per cent last month, also dropped marginally.

Bill Martin, chief economist at UBS, warned that "the gain in inflation could be offset by that ultimate seasonal factor, the Budget. Last year's had the effect of increasing prices by almost 1 per cent."

Ahead of the Budget, the Chancellor received a welcome fillip when it emerged that the Government repaid £1.3bn of its debt last month, a surprise after months of higher-than-expected borrowing.

Headline inflation dropped from 3.9 to 3.2 per cent in October, its lowest for almost a year. The underlying rate of inflation targeted by the Government – which excludes mortgage interest payments – also fell unexpectedly, from 3.1 to 2.9 per cent. Describing the figures as very encouraging, the Treasury said they showed that domestic inflationary pressures remained subdued.

The dramatic fall in the headline rate, the biggest since January 1993, was the result of the sharpest monthly fall in retail prices for any October for 50 years. A reduction in inflation had been widely expected as the effects of the building societies' recent cut in mortgage rates fed through to the index and the impact of last year's rise

pushing the market." CSFB analyst Philip Tyson forecast that the latest inflation data shifted the probability in favour of a 50-basis point cut before or around the end of the year." Gilt yields received an additional boost from news that the Government's finances are at last starting to improve after several disappointing months of public sector borrowing.

On Wall Street, the Dow,

which started the year at 3,833.48, has been setting new highs for most of November.

The catalyst for yesterday's jump in shares was weaker-than-expected figures from the Philadelphia Fed.

One of the regional offices of the US central bank, said its business outlook diffusion index

sharply rose to 7.9 in November from 2.5 in October, while its

prices paid index dropped to 12.3 from 30.3.

Following on from Wednesday's announcement of a full in US output, the report fuelled renewed speculation that the Fed may cut interest rates again before the end of the year if the budget dispute in Washington is resolved.

The hopes pushed long bonds up over 1-1/2 to yield 6.22 per cent, with shares following in their wake.

"It's awesome," said Ralph

Acampora, director of technical research at Prudential Securities.

"The rally is broad based and includes most of the Dow stocks, regardless of industry, and it's dragging the other indices up.

"This is quality, blue-chip leadership and you can't beat that." The Dow could hit 5,000 "maybe tomorrow", he added.

L&G plans to continue to use most of this money as working capital for its profit business. It also aims to change the rules to prevent future cross-funding for the with-profits part of the fund from other areas, including unit-linked policies, term assurance and annuities.

The pay-out to policyholders will add about £900 to a 25-year policy maturing in December, where a £30-a-month premium would already have led to a pay-out worth £61,400.

Shareholders will gain by an underpinning of the amount payable to them. They ex-

pected to receive an additional £18m this year as their share of the bonus pay-out, with their interest in the fund growing by about £150m overall.

The company added that the change in rules, together with the increase in shareholders' interest, meant that it would be able to maintain a market-beating dividend policy.

The pay-out follows similar distributions from other insurers' "



COMMENT

"It is easy to see why BT might be interested in Cable & Wireless ... but there are enormous obstacles to overcome if such a marriage is to be consummated"

Still the same questions to be answered at C&W

Lord Young of Graffham has been so closely associated with Cable & Wireless's refusal to address the issue of its stock market undervaluation that his retirement has been seen as a panacea. Plainly it is not, however, for even though there is now a set date for his departure, the viability of the global telecoms federation is as unclear as ever.

For a company that remains wedded to the idea of a global network of companies, C&W's eagerness to spell out the economic benefits of the federation yesterday smacked of defensiveness; it would not have looked out of place in a takeover bid defense document. The figures do, however, put the debate on to a more scientific footing, even if outsiders can only take the company sword for the claimed £50m a year boost to annual profits from better buying terms and shared product and service development.

If the figures can be believed, they are not inconsequential in the context of a company expected to make profits this year of about £1.3bn. But they hardly represent a stumbling block to a takeover of the company by a global telecoms player such as BT or AT&T with even greater access to the claimed economies of scale.

It is easy to see why BT might be interested in C&W – it is keen to establish a presence in the Far East for its "concentric" business telephone operation. Hongkong Telecom, mainly owned by C&W, would be an excellent launching pad. But there are enormous obstacles to overcome if such a

marriage is to be consummated, with regulators at home and the Chinese government to be satisfied along the way. Furthermore, a change of ownership would certainly be used by the Hong Kong authorities as a way of screwing down on the relatively generous regulatory regime the company presently operates under.

Even so, there is a treasure trove of hidden value in C&W still waiting to be unlocked, and a sum-of-parts valuation can quite conservatively put a price of 600p a share on the company compared with the current 425p. Furthermore, the strategy conundrum remains as problematic as ever, with the company pulling in two different directions – the monopoly supplier in Hong Kong and other far-flung territories, and the upstart attacking the monopoly Britain.

Lord Young or no Lord Young, investors will ask the same question: When will all that value be reflected in the share price?

A watershed for national papers

Rupert Murdoch has a simple view of the future as far as British national newspapers are concerned. He believes that one day there will be only five daily titles left. It scarcely needs saying that the Murdoch crystal ball foresees that at least two of the survivors will be his. Last night he went some way to making the prophecy come true by

announcing the closure of one of News International's five titles, *Today*.

It seems unlikely this will prove the fuse that ignites the wholesale rationalisation of British newspapers Mr Murdoch foresees (the easing of competitive pressures implied by a rise in the cover price of the *Times* would indicate the contrary), but there is no doubt that this is a watershed of sorts. Add to the closure the present fevered level of speculation over the Express titles, rumoured meetings between Mr Murdoch and Lord Rothermere of Associated, and there is quite enough to think that something seismic is in the offing.

Closing *Today* could hardly have been a difficult commercial decision to make. Harder to explain is why News bought the title from its then owner, Tiny Rowland, in the first place, or why it was prepared to tolerate accumulated losses of an astonishing £140m for as long as it did. The clear bet is that at least some of *Today's* 500,000 readers will move to other News International titles, particularly the *Times*. That view reflects Mr Murdoch's belief that newspapers are like any other commodity – price-sensitive and driven by the usual market forces of under- and over-capacity.

The circulation gains made by the *Times* since the price war began lend some support to that view. Far from proving the point that there is too much capacity in the market, however, the only effect so far of the cover price war has been to plunge large parts of

the industry, including the *Times*, into losses which, in the long term, look as unsustainable as those of *Today*.

No need to panic about Ford's offer

Has Ford set a new pay benchmark with its inflation-beating offer to UK employees? Ford regards its job as to set pay levels appropriate to its own operations and local conditions; it doesn't care a fig what ministers think. There have been tremendous strides in productivity at Ford's UK plants, which are not far behind those in Germany. The pay offer is not a charitable reward for effort but a self-interested move to forestall unrest on production lines that have been pushed hard in recent years.

Time was when the annual Ford settlement was the bellwether for the pay round. The fact that unions have turned down 4.75 per cent has understandably sent shivers down the spines of those with long memories. If Ford's offer were to be copied across the country, the surprise fall in retail price inflation to 3.2 per cent in October announced yesterday would turn out to be a blip. In reality, however, the Ford settlement is more likely to show that the going rate has all but gone as a concept, losing much of its punch in today's flexible labour market. The latest earnings figures show a very sharp divergence between manufacturing and services.

Underlying earnings in manufacturing rose by 4.25 per cent in August and September, but by only 2.5 per cent in services. There is marked divergence within these sectors, too. In manufacturing, annual earnings growth till September was as low as 2.5 per cent in textiles, but 4.4 per cent in the car industry. In services, earnings growth was 1.3 per cent in hotels and restaurants but has been rising at 4.5 per cent in the wholesale trade.

Much more important than the "going rate" for pay increases is the rate of inflation itself. Pay settlements have all risen in the course of the year, as negotiators seek to ensure that wages do not fall behind inflation. The new and startling fall in retail price inflation could reverse the trend, if sustained.

The divergence of settlements between industries suggests that successful companies operating across national boundaries will pay better than purely domestic companies operating in Britain's deregulated labour market, where collective bargaining has faded away.

At Ford, there is only the loosest of linkages between pay settlements in the various European centres. But any company operating throughout the Continent is accustomed to dealing in an adult way with works councils and centralised pay bargaining, and like Ford will be prepared to cut a generous deal with unions when it suits. The difference now is that the rest of industry no longer has to panic when that happens.

Departure date for Lord Young fuels bid rumours

TOM STEVENSON
Deputy City Editor

Lord Young put a date on his retirement from Cable & Wireless yesterday "to end the recent informed and destabilising comment, and to put the record straight". His departure immediately re-ignited speculation that BT would launch a bid for the company, to establish a presence in the Far East and realise what many observers see as C&W's hidden value.

Lord Young will leave a company still struggling to convince the City of the merits of its global telecommunications federation, but determined to press ahead with its strategy. Chairman of C&W since 1990, he will quit in February 1997.

He said yesterday he had decided to put an end to speculation about his future following a spate of newspaper articles suggesting he was under pressure from institutions to quit, and alleging a rift with the company's other directors. Denying any disagreement, Lord Young said it had always been his intention to quit on his 65th birthday.

Cable & Wireless has long struggled to convince investors of the value of its federation of telecoms companies around the world, with Lord Young most closely associated with the company's failure to present its case properly and its refusal to change its strategy to realise its value to shareholders.

At times the stock market value of C&W has been barely more than the market capitalisation of the company's 57 per cent shareholding in Hongkong Telecom, its most valuable asset, although the valuation gap has narrowed sharply in recent months.

Lord Young said he would have no say in the selection of his replacement, but expected it to be an external appoint-

ment, probably another former politician with the skills to carry on his ambassadorial role around the world, especially in the fast-growing telecommunications markets of Asia.

Lord Young announced his planned departure alongside a 9 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for the six months to September. He warned that growth in demand for fixed-wire services had slowed in line with lower economic activity in some of C&W's markets, but said Mercury was back on track and pointed to sharply lower losses from start-up associate companies.

After a 7 per cent rise in turnover to £2.71bn, operating profits rose by a similar amount to £636m. Reported pre-tax profits of £815m included a £19m exceptional profit from the sale of C&W's 5 per cent stake in Mannesmann Mobilfunk, a German mobile phone company. Underlying profits of £616m compared with £567m.

The company responded to persistent criticism of its federation of telecoms companies around the world by spelling out for the first time the economic value of the network. Better management of telephone traffic, sharper procurement terms and shared product and service development were worth £40m in first-half pre-tax profits, C&W said, and would add £90m to the bottom line in the full year to next March.

In the six months to September, Mercury lifted operating profits from £96m to £103m and claimed 15 per cent growth in residential lines compared with the small decline announced last week by BT, and twice BT's rate of growth in domestic and international call volumes.

Following a 25 per cent reduction in staff numbers over the past year, Mercury said it had reduced its on-going cost base by £60m.

Profile, page 25

Rail privatisation: Outsiders emerge as clear favourites but still face pitfalls in franchise battle

GWR bidder unveils plan for extra trains

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Resurgence Railways, the new rail company that is set to win the franchise to run InterCity services out of Paddington, is planning to increase the number of trains in an effort to win passengers back to rail.

The emergence of Resurgence as the favourite to take over the Great Western Railway is the surprise of the first group of three franchises which are due to be allocated next month. The company is led by a group of managers including former Trafalgar House finance director John Ainsell. Resurgence is the preferred bidder – having beaten off a management buy-out team – and has until the end of next week to submit the final terms of its bid.

Mr Ainsell shared a £1.3bn pay-off with two colleagues

when they left Trafalgar nearly two years ago, and he has teamed up with Mike Jones, a former BR area manager at Leeds, and Richard Morris, safety director of Eurotunnel. Mr Jones, the vice-chairman, is known in rail circles as an experienced manager who was highly critical of the high freight prices charged by BR when he was in charge of petroleum movements on rail.

Resurgence is thought to require more subsidy – currently BR requires £51m for the service – than the rival bid but has put forward a series of innovations that attracted the support of the franchising director, Roger Salmon. It wants to run more trains from distant parts of the network in Wales and the West directly into London by splitting up the existing eight-coach InterCity 125 high-speed trains into two.

The company also wants to re-establish direct services to London on routes that currently require a change to reach the capital. One insider said: "The MBO team were offering nothing new, and Resurgence came along with an exciting new package, adding to what is already a very good service."

Nevertheless, the bid faces several pitfalls. Adding trains beyond the number required by Mr Salmon means that the track access charges from Railtrack will increase.

There are also additional costs in splitting the high-speed trains because they will need a new trailer at the rear. But the team is confident that with fares being restricted to the rate of inflation and less under the new financial regime imposed by the Government, extra passengers will be won back to the railways.



Resurgence: planning to revive the traditions of 'God's Wonderful Railway'

IN BRIEF

Keebler frozen foods sale

United Biscuits is selling its Keebler frozen foods business to Windsor Corporation, a US foods group, for £54.8m, a week after selling Keebler's cookies and cracker business for £316m. United has now raised \$580m from the sale of Keebler's division, with only the loss-making salty snacks (crisps) business still to be sold. The division recorded a £13.6m loss on sales of £76m last year.

Cortworth flotation to raise £25m

Engineering group Cortworth will have a market value of £71.6m when it joins the stock market next month. The company is raising £25.7m from the flotation, which is priced at 150p per share. The funds will be used for expansion and acquisition. Cortworth was formed two years ago as a management buy-out from Williams Holdings, the industrial conglomerate. After the float, Williams will have a 19.99 per cent stake in the company.

Cadbury sells ITnet

Cadbury Schweppes has sold its ITnet information technology division to a management buy-out for £32.5m. Cadbury will retain a 12.5 per cent stake in the business.

Yates' shares hit a peak

The share price of Yates Brothers Wine Lodges climbed 5p to a fresh peak of 291p on yesterday's interim results, showing a 19 per cent rise in sales to £29.2m, and a 50 per cent surge in taxable profits to £3.2m. The share price is more than double last year's flotation price of 140p. Yates has 55 outlets, and wants to have 100 outlets by the turn of the millennium. The interim dividend is 1.2p. Analysts forecast that annual profits will climb from £5.1m to £6.6m.

Profile, page 25

Alarm at Boeing merger talks

RUSSELL HOTTON

Europe's aircraft industry is on alert after reports that America's Boeing and McDonnell Douglas are in merger talks that would create the world's largest aerospace group and force thousands of job losses.

A merger combining Boeing's dominance of commercial aircraft with MD's military expertise, would spark a fresh round of consolidation among Europe's struggling aerospace companies.

Attempts to create a single US aircraft maker would face anti-trust hurdles and intense political opposition in Washington, and analysts believe an asset swap is more likely than a full-blown merger. But European aerospace companies said that rationalisation of the two US giants would put pressure on them to follow suit.

Airbus, in which British Aerospace is a partner, said a deal would intensify global competition and underline the need for further cost savings at Europe's aerospace companies.



Frank Shrontz: sights set on McDonnell Douglas

able to counter such measures in the US. If we do not do that, our defence industries will disappear.

Neither Boeing nor McDonnell Douglas would comment yesterday on reports in the *Wall Street Journal* that the companies were negotiating a deal, which would create a combined company worth \$35bn with a 70 per cent global market share.

Boeing, headed by Frank Shrontz, is the world's largest commercial aircraft company, but like its rivals has struggled as airlines delayed orders during the recession. MD's smaller commercial division has teetered on the edge of collapse for many years and the company has been sustained by its military aircraft sales.

Nick Cunningham, analyst at BZW, believes anti-trust problems may prevent a merger of the civil businesses, though not the military operations. "I guess it is a matter of what the Department of Defense thinks," he said. "I'm sure they're talking to each other, as everybody is, because there's

clearly further rationalisation to go in the US defence industry as there is in Europe."

The Pentagon has traditionally encouraged its military suppliers to merge, and gave its blessing to last year's \$10bn deal which brought together Lockheed and Martin Marietta. Lockheed Martin has already cut thousands of jobs.

Airbus has been gaining market share on Boeing for several years, and last year overtook its rival. But this week's news that the US company had won a huge order from Singapore Airlines came as a blow.

Both Airbus and Boeing have forecast that airlines will need to order 13,000 to 15,000 new aircraft worth over \$1,000bn in the next 20 years to replace ageing fleets.

Last year Airbus won firm orders for 125 new aircraft worth \$9.1bn while Boeing announced sales of 120 worth \$7.7bn. In contrast Boeing has already announced sales this year of over 300 aircraft, including the Singapore deal, while Airbus has just 82 orders.

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN
Edited by Magnus Grimond

Beware the Offer PowerGen can't refuse

Shares in PowerGen have underperformed the market since September's announcement that it was in talks to buy Midlands Electricity. Confirmation that the £1.95bn takeover will go ahead has underscored investors' fears that winning the bid would expose PowerGen to more flak from Ofgem, the regulator, and the politicians. Thus far, PowerGen has done well out of electricity deregulation, as yesterday's interim profits demonstrate. Pre-tax profits jumped 13 per cent to £133m in the six months to 1 October, but the surprise came in a half-way dividend raised 30 per cent to 6.5p. The largesse was possible because the company bought back 7.6 per cent of its shares at the government sell-off in March, which meant the cost of the interim payout rose only 18 per cent.

The medium-term plan is to lower dividend cover from last year's level of over three times to 2.5-2.7 times. But there are doubts about whether PowerGen will maintain the same level of generosity at the year-end. Although the shares rose 13p to 568p on yesterday's dividend news, longer-

term the realities of PowerGen's position will determine the price.

The case for buying Midlands rests in large part on its capacity to secure a market for a substantial part of PowerGen's output and to give access to billing, marketing and customer service expertise. The goal is to create a fully integrated electricity company better equipped to compete when the market is fully deregulated in 1998 and the lucrative supply contracts with the regional electricity companies end.

The problem is that any benefits from the Midlands customer base will not be felt in the short term. By 1998, only 16 per cent of PowerGen's expected output will not be tied up in long-term contracts with other Regos and so available to Midlands.

In the meantime, by acquiring Midlands, PowerGen will have subjected an estimated quarter of its profits to regulation by Ofgem and the possibility of a Labour government imposing tighter price or profit controls. It is also facing a continued loss of market share, which will be exacerbated by yesterday's completion of the forced

sell-off of two power stations to Eastern, and a possible fall in the price at which electricity is traded.

Long-term, PowerGen may or may not make a go of new activities ranging from overseas power generation to gas distribution. But short-term sentiment will be dominated by whether it gets government clearance to acquire Midlands. Profits of £500m this year would put the shares, up 13p at 568p, on a prospective multiple of only 10. Not expensive, but only weakly supported by a forward yield of 4 per cent.

Plans to discuss overseas opportunities with local partners likewise look promising. The company has assured shareholders and analysts it does not intend to spend freely in markets it doesn't know. But it feels, rightly, that its sales and management skills are exportable, given the right strategic partners and provided it sticks to deregulated, commercial markets.

There are still a few concerns about what the company will do with its £20m in cash, and analysts have been pressing for a firmer statement of strategy from Richard Eyre and his team. Yesterday they got it: plans to bid for a commercial radio licence in Yorkshire, among other franchises, expansion into multimedia, partnerships with overseas radio companies and, of all things, a "radio-themed" restaurant.

Of the four, only the vague "multimedia" push looks suspect. For a radio company to think about investing in on-line services seems a bit of a stretch, given how many big media companies are already sniffing around this potentially cash-draining sector. But the restaurant scheme looks a bright idea. The company is moving into offices in Leicester Square, and plans to convert an existing ground-floor restaurant into a Planet Hollywood-style hang-out, with radio memorabilia on the walls.

Plans to discuss overseas opportunities with local partners likewise look promising. The company has assured shareholders and analysts it does not intend to spend freely in markets it doesn't know. But it feels, rightly, that its sales and management skills are exportable, given the right strategic partners and provided it sticks to deregulated, commercial markets.

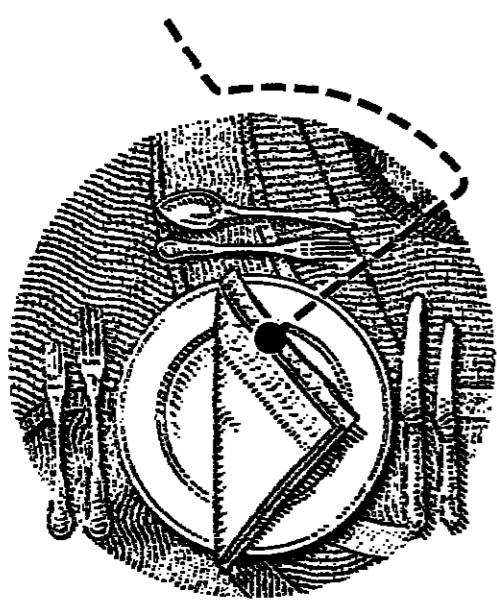
Core radio remains the focus, however. And with pre-tax profit likely to grow to £32m this year (30p a share) and £38m next (38p), the shares look reasonably good value at 11 times next year's earnings.

Capital return by radio station

Sparkling results from Capital Radio have put UK commercial radio solidly in the media spotlight – and with good reason. Radio has doubled its share of national advertising to about 4 per cent in only three years, and has room to grow. Capital, one of the largest and best-managed radio companies, is taking full advantage, reporting pre-

Improving business performance. A few helpful ideas from Mercury.

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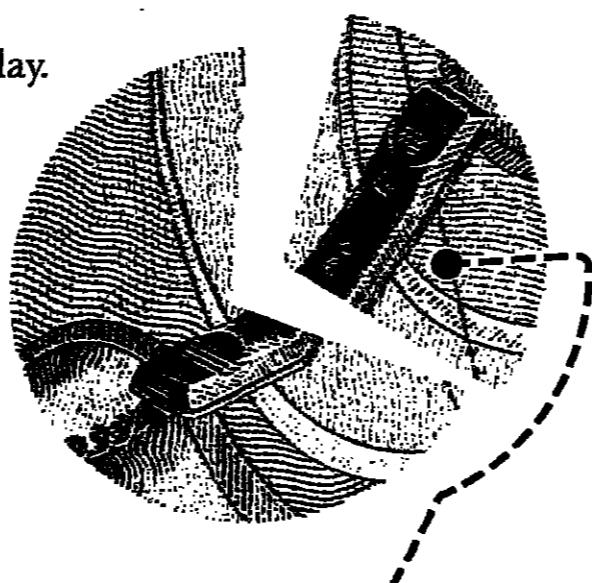
- Enables employees to walk in a straight line during the afternoon.
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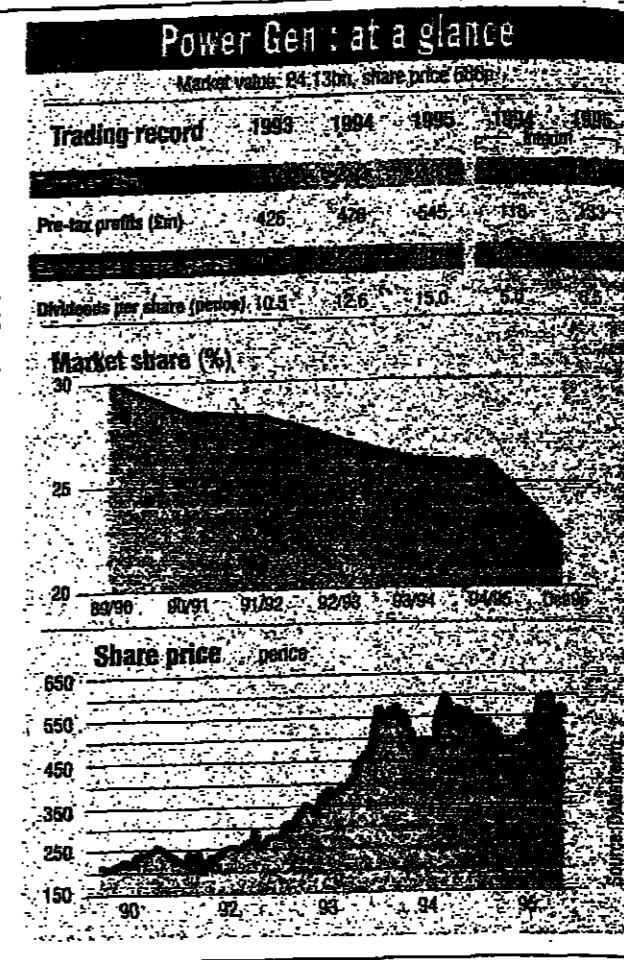
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Simon Pincombe
CITY DIARY

Hewlett ready to rejoice in half-year ritual

Only hours to go for the happy band that is the Hewlett-Packard workforce. Today Lew Platt, the computer giant's president, chief executive officer and chairman, announces the six-monthly profit share. This is not a figure to be sneezed at. Last summer every employee worldwide collected 11 per cent of basic salary.

But the announcement itself has developed into something of a ritual. Mr Platt likes to deliver the good news personally and simultaneously to all corners of Hewlett's global empire.

At 0800 hours in California (1600 hours in the UK) the international workforce will don soldering irons and gather round the tannoy expectantly. The inevitable bit of static will be followed by the unmistakable voice of the illustrious leader (only the third in the company's history) as he announces the figure. This will then be followed by a traditional and resounding "Hurrah", and the money will be in the pay packets two weeks later.

Oh, by the way, Hewlett has never announced a quarterly loss since it was founded in 1939. Funny that.

Airbus Industrie has hit back in decisive fashion over the loss of the £88m Singapore Airline order to Boeing. The European consortium has finally succeeded in suppressing further publication of Karl Sabbagh's *21st Century Jet*, which chronicles the development of the Boeing 777. You will recall that Singaporeans ordered 77 of the offending planes this week.

"We are required to recall all copies of the book," says Macmillan, co-publishers of the book with Channel Four. "Airbus Industrie has complained."

A quick leaf-through reveals nothing too sinister. But a hint of what is to come can be gleaned from page 12 where Mr Sabbagh writes: "Before libel lawyers from all seven continents descend on the publisher of this book it is worth pointing out that ..."

Cocking a snook at the anti-nuclear movement, Barclays Bank attempts to take the public relations pressure off Shell by embracing the Beaujolais Nouveau. Various branches were offering free tastings yesterday, with Holborn branch even hanging out French flags. In the City, Bells Brothers reported that the light and fruity number "which shows no excess of the yeast that has marred some of the previous vintages", had sold 500 bottles by 10am at 24.20 each plus VAT. We shall have to see how it goes down in Tahiti.

Never reluctant to issue guidelines where none are needed the Americans have published the definitive guide on how to look acceptably scruffy at work.

A booklet from Hagar Clothing, a brand new company that's been around for years (sic), describes the finer points of dressing down: the wearing of more casual clothes than tradition dictates.

"Like the information highway and political correctness, dressing down is off and running before anyone's figured how it works," warns Hagar. "Though 75 per cent



Fashion scene: The art of dressing down at the office

of Fortune 500 companies now have some sort of dressing down policy. They rarely spell it out in a memo. It's almost as if they are testing employees to see who will screw up."

Should you feel the sudden urge to dress down, follow the code. Instead of traditional, standard colour silk ties, switch to cotton and knit fabrics. "Show appreciation for a holiday or display your favourite dog."

Come to think of it, there was a polo neck seen at SBC Warburg recently.

Hectic trading at Credit Lyonnais where some entrepreneur has been trying to shift a load of rugs in the run-up to Christmas. Telephone callers to the bank could even hear prices being quoted.

Brutal push

COMPANY RESULTS				
	Turnover £	Pre-Tax £	EPS	Dividend
Capital Radio (F)	67.4m (51.7m)	39.3m (22.1m)	24p (16.0p)	10.25p (7.5p)
Cable and Wireless (I)	2.71m (2.54m)	81.5m (56.7m)	19.6p (11.5p)	3.08p (2.83p)
CE Health (I)	62.0m (51.4m)	1.3m (1.3m)	-3.3p (5.3p)	3p (5p)
Portsmouth & Sandland (I)	7.0m (6.0m)	4.9m (5.3m)	24.5p (28p)	3.88p (3.51p)
PowerGen (I)	1.108m (1.148m)	13.2m (11.9m)	13.4p (10.0p)	6.5p (5p)
Scapa Group (I)	24.8m (20.5m)	27.7m (23.0m)	7.8p (6.2p)	1.78p (1.7p)
SBN Group (I)	6.75m (5.3m)	4.82m (2.47m)	7.1p (3.8p)	0.75p (0.5p)
Southwest (I)	1.32m (1.13m)	1.97m (1.41m)	8.48p (6.14p)	1.75p (1.35p)
String (I)	12.9m (10.9m)	4.45m (2.56m)	2.13p (1.59p)	1.42p (1.25p)
Telegraph (I)	182m (170m)	25.6m (33.9m)	5.8p (4.2p)	-
Voice Brothers (I)	21.2m (21.5m)	3.19m (2.13m)	5.8p (4.2p)	1.2p (1p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (M) - Half months

Lord Young, who has announced he is to quit the telecoms giant, will leave an air of lost opportunity at its Mercury offshoot. Paul Vallely reports

Five years of crossed lines at Cable & Wireless

In my wallet I carry two symbols of corporate failure. They are my Mercury phonecards - £10 and £2 respectively. Mr Cholmondeley-Warner, Harry Enfield's moustachioed cartoon icon of post-war propriety, would be impressed. No one else would be. I carry them like talismans. They seem to work. For less and less do I encounter those strange blue creatures that pass for Mercury pay phones.

So whatever happened to Mercury? Eleven years ago the company was apparently given a licence to print money when it was granted exclusive rights to challenge the monopoly of British Telecom. Yet in the decade that has passed it seems hardly to have dentled the market. Last year it was forced to announce it is gradually to shut down the call boxes, lay off 2,500 staff and restructure the business at a cost of £12m. Then last week the man responsible for the new strategy, Duncan Lewis, abruptly resigned himself, with no job to go to.

Mercury is now on to its fifth chief executive in six years. So an impossible job, or is it chairman, Lord Young of Graftham - Margaret Thatcher's one-time favourite minister - just impossible to work with?

Things were looking good for Mercury in 1990, when Lord Young took over as chairman of its parent company, Cable & Wireless. Not long before, as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, he had awarded a mobile telephony licence to Mercury. His appointment seemed to make sense for C&W, the telecom giant that was once the communications system of empire and which spans 50 countries.

Lord Young went with a can-do reputation. "Everyone else brings me problems," David

brings me solutions," Mrs Thatcher memorably said of the man she brought unselected into the Cabinet, enabling him for the purpose, after being impressed with his performance as head of the Manpower Services Commission.

But not everyone was pleased. Gordon Owen, the chief executive, had hoped for the top job himself. Mr Owen, a capable old C&W hand who was autocratic, energetic and obstinate, began a power struggle that lasted 10 months. "He made no effort to work with the new chairman," one insider said. "The end was inevitable."

One day a friend walked into Mr Owen's office and announced that a headhunter had offered him Mr Owen's job. After 37 years at C&W he went to receive his dismissal with the words: "Right, you've taken my whole life; what's the deal?" The deal was almost £1m and this week, with Mercury in chaos, Mr Owen was maintaining a satisfied silence; he is chairman of the National Grid's telecom outfit, Energis, which is using electricity pylons to support fibre-optic wires to become the third big player in a rapidly expanding telecom market that now has almost 60 firms holding licences.

With Mr Owen gone, Lord Young became an executive chairman. He was hands-on about new business development and as an international

front-man but also "dabbling and dipping in and out elsewhere," in the words of one former senior C&W executive, "in a manner which people working for him find difficult".

It was a pattern familiar to senior civil servants at the DTI who, in an unpublished survey, showed they didn't like him. Difficult, abrasive, bullying, shallow, slightly flashy, PR-driven were among the verdicts. Lord Young was shrinking their department but many outsiders shared the view. "Slick and strangely lack-

ing in presence," one said. "He may be the man with solutions, but they don't last," another said. "He has a short attention span." Is the judgement of one who has worked closely with him. "He has big ideas but doesn't have the concentration to carry them through."

"It was reasonable enough to change Owen," says James Dodd, telecom analyst with Kleinwort Benson. "He and Lord Sharp, the former chairman, had done a good job but something new was needed to take the company into a new era. You wanted a blue-chip corporate manager." Lord Young

found one in James Ross, who came from BT as C&W chief executive - "a calm, straight guy who works for consensus," colleagues said. But he has found no one to stay at Mercury.

His first chief executive there, Peter van Cuylenburg, decided that as BT got its act together Mercury was going to need a more specific strategy to compete. "It couldn't be a mini-BT across the board," one former C&W executive said. The man inevitably known as PVC immersed the company in a com-

mating its own return on investment and making a number of key errors. They point to its precipitate move to a coinless market in payphones and its policy of free off-peak calls in its mobile phone system. "Free calls in the evening," one analyst said, "secured them quick penetration of the market but people bought phones and only used them for free in the evening."

In the City people asked if the 63-year-old Lord Young was worth his total remuneration package of almost £1m a year.

Mercury was one of the most spectacular investments of the Eighties under Lord Sharp," says James Dodd at Kleinwort Benson. "But it has underperformed dramatically for the past two years. It doesn't reflect well on Lord Young. In the end, a chairman only has one job - to appoint a successful team - that's the only thing he has to do."

Much will turn on the outcome of Mercury's recent £825m investment in the Germany telecom company Vodafone. "It is an enormous gamble when the political and regulatory structure of the German market is undecided," another analyst said. "Mercury has gone critical." It is not the only key strategic decision to be made.

One of Duncan Lewis's concerns was that C&W - on whose main board he was offered a place just before he left - is currently trying to do too much. A "federation" is how Lord Young likes to describe it: a "hotch-potch" is Mr Lewis's view.

"There is no doubt that C&W is a house divided," one international analyst said. "It is a schizophrenic organisation - a monopoly operator in many countries and yet the market entrant in others."



Big ideas, but ... Lord Young came with a 'can-do' reputation, though his hands-on approach grated on some

Brutal push that could discredit private finance for public projects

If there was one really serious grumble about the Government at the CBI conference this week it was the failure of the Private Finance Initiative to deliver the grand promises made for it by ministers.

The PFI, a centrepiece of Treasury policy that has the full backing of the Prime Minister, is meant to draw private money into projects that in the past have been funded directly by the taxpayer. But much of business now sees the whole idea as no more than a fig-leaf to cover the nakedness of the Government's commitment to spending on roads, railways, hospitals, education and prisons.

The consensus in Birmingham was that it was a good idea gone horribly wrong. The public spending cuts are going ahead, but the PFI is bogged down in bureaucracy and incapable of filling the gap.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, will promise yet another expansion of the PFI in the Budget but you do not have to be a wizard at arithmetic to see how easily this can camouflage public

INDUSTRY VIEW

PETER RODGERS

lic spending cuts, to pay for a tax giveaway. The Chancellor and Michael Jack, the minister responsible for the PFI, are aware enough of the risk of the PFI failing apart if nothing is done.

Possible new projects worth a total of £25bn have been identified. The message from the Treasury to departmental permanent secretaries during the public expenditure round

has been to bring forward your PFI projects because that is the only way you will be allowed to meet your investment targets.

This method of implementing the PFI has proved brutal indeed, and it is said that careers will be broken by failure to deliver.

The campaign is at least in part a reaction to foot-dragging throughout Whitehall during the first 18 months of the PFI,

the leading propagandist for the PFI until this summer, stuck the knife in deeper this week by asking in a public lecture, "Where's the beef?" Sir Alastair, a co-chairman of Eurotunnel, was chairman until the summer of the Private Finance Panel, a body whose job is to steer and promote the initiative.

He likened the situation when he left the panel to a tube of toothpaste: "Pressure on the initiation end has produced a bulging of the tube followed by a spurt from time to time as some, but not enough, of the product came out." He blamed private industry and - with a particularly sharp tongue -

Even now, only £1.3bn of the £5bn contracts the Chancellor said a year ago would be let by next March have actually been agreed. That £5bn figure includes the £2.3bn Channel tunnel rail link, which does appear to be grinding slowly towards an agreement, but probably because of a rapid increase in the bribe - sorry, contribution - from the public purse.

If the CBI attack were not enough, Sir Alastair Morton, the campaigner, has yet to come to terms with a cultural change that requires them to understand and price commercial risks, and oversee services to be provided by the private sector over as long as 25 years.

The basic requirement of a PFI contract is that it transfers financial risk from the public to the private sector, so that the outlay no longer counts as public spending. Overruns on conventional public sector works are invariably paid for by taxpayers.

Under the PFI, the company is

he believes, have yet to come to terms with a cultural change that requires them to understand and price commercial risks, and oversee services to be provided by the private sector over as long as 25 years.

The Treasury claims that as well as the effort from the top to persuade departments to push the PFI forward, it has begun a drive to retrain civil servants at all levels in spending departments in the new disciplines. But the numbers of people are small and the pace so slow it is hard to believe -

that the task is to change the working method of entire divisions of the civil service - that this will make a dramatic difference within the timescale of the public spending cuts.

A deeper problem may be the Treasury itself. An organisation whose role in life is saying yes or no to other people's spending plans is not best suited to a crash programme of instilling an entrepreneurial culture in the rest of Whitehall.

By building up expectations, for political reasons, of how fast the PFI can deliver work to companies, the Government is discrediting a worthwhile exercise before it is fully operational.

CLASSIFIED

Legal Notices

Legal Notices

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE CHANCERY DIVISION COMPANIES COURT

No. 006178 of 1995

IN THE MATTER OF PROVIDENT MUTUAL LIFE ASSURANCE ASSOCIATION and - IN THE MATTER OF GENERAL ACCIDENT LINKED LIFE ASSURANCE LIMITED and -

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition ("the Petition") was on the 4th October, 1995 presented to Her Majesty's High Court by the above-named Provident Mutual Life Assurance Association ("Provident Mutual") for the sanction of the Court under Part I of Schedule 2C to the Insurance Companies Act 1982 ("the Act") to a Scheme (the "Scheme") providing for the transfer to General Accident Linked Life Assurance Limited ("GA Linked Life") of the whole of the long term business (as defined by Section 1(1) of the said Act) of Provident Mutual and for orders making ancillary provisions in connection with the said transfer under paragraph 5 of Schedule 2C to the Act.

Copies of the Petition (consisting of the Scheme) and a Report by an Independent Actuary pursuant to paragraph 2 of Schedule 2C to the Act may be inspected at each of the offices specified in the Schedule hereto during normal business hours for a period of 21 days from the publication of this notice.

The Petition is directed to be heard before the Judge at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LJ on the 20th December, 1995. Any person (including any employee of Provident Mutual or GA Linked Life) who claims that he or she would be adversely affected by the Scheme may apply to the court for a injunction in person or by Counsel. Any person who intends so to apply and any policyholder of Provident Mutual or GA Linked Life who objects to the Scheme but does not intend so to appear should do so not less than two clear days prior notice in writing of such intention or dissent and of the reasons therefor to the Solicitors named below.

Copies of the documents referred to above will be furnished by such Solicitors to any person requiring them prior to the making of an Order sanctioning the Scheme on payment of £11.40 (being a charge of 10p for each page).

Dated this 16th November, 1995
HERBERT SMITH, Exchange House, Primrose Street, London EC2A 3PS. Ref: 146/350 Solicitors for Provident Mutual

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In search of the beautiful game

In a recent edition of the BBC's documentary series on European football, *Football, Fussball, Voetbal*, Hugh McIlvanney recalled a fellow Scottish journalist's comment after Real Madrid had beaten Eintracht Frankfurt 7-3 at Hampden Park in 1960. "It's all very well, but would our punters stand for that every week?" McIlvanney was asked. "They have just stood around for an hour, stunned with admiration, McIlvanney replied. "Would they stand for it? They would like the chance."

Modern defensive techniques and attitudes mean the 1996 European Championship is unlikely to bring us anything to equal that match, but it could give the British game the confidence to re-examine its approach. Tony Adams said this week that the public need to be educated to expect a more patient game. As the wide interest in the BBC series and Channel 4's coverage of English football has illustrated, they may be ready to learn.

Thoughts are increasingly turning to Euro 96 following the conclusion on Wednesday of the qualifying competition (although

Is the time right for British football to alter its approach? asks Glenn Moore

the last of the 16 places will not be decided until next month's play-off between the Republic of Ireland and the Netherlands).

The last time England staged a major tournament, in 1966, Pele was kicked out of the tournament, several matches were disfigured by malicious and violent play, and the winners were a side who owed as much to Nobby Stiles as Bobby Charlton.

The consequence was two decades of stagnation within the English game. This time there is hope of better things.

Since the last World Cup there has been a move towards brighter football, led by the likes of Ajax and encouraged by stricter referees. More than half of next summer's teams have caught this mood – Croatia, France, Romania and Portugal are all entering sides while Russia, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy and England have similar potential.

Final qualifying tables

Group One										Group Five									
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		W	D	L	F	A	Pts						
Portugal	10	6	3	15	9	21	Czech Rep	10	6	3	15	9	21						
France	10	5	5	22	2	20	Netherlands	10	6	3	15	9	20						
Sweden	10	4	4	14	18	14	Norway	10	6	2	17	7	19						
Poland	10	3	4	14	12	7	Bulgaria	10	3	2	15	8	13						
Iceland	10	3	3	13	13	7	Malta	10	3	2	15	8	13						
Azerbaijan	10	0	1	9	2	9		10	0	2	8	2	22						

Group Two										Group Six									
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		W	D	L	F	A	Pts						
Spain	10	8	2	0	25	4	26	Portugal	10	7	2	1	29	7	23				
Denmark	10	6	3	11	9	21	Iceland	10	6	3	15	9	20						
Belgium	10	5	4	13	12	11	Northern Ireland	10	6	2	17	7	19						
Macedonia	10	4	4	9	12	7	Austria	10	5	1	14	16	15						
Cyprus	10	1	4	6	20	7	Latvia	10	4	0	8	11	19						
America	1	2	7	5	17	5	Liechtenstein	10	0	1	1	40	0						

Group Three										Group Seven									
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		W	D	L	F	A	Pts						
Switzerland	5	2	1	15	7	25	Russia	10	8	1	27	10	25						
Turkey	3	4	1	16	8	15	Bulgaria	10	7	3	24	10	25						
Sweden	8	2	3	9	10	9	Moldova	10	3	0	9	12	9						
Hungary	8	2	2	7	13	7	Wales	10	2	2	6	9	19						
Iceland	8	1	2	5	12	5	Albania	10	2	2	6	10	16						

Group Four										Group Eight									
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		W	D	L	F	A	Pts						
Croatia	10	7	2	12	5	23	Russia	10	8	2	34	6	26						
Italy	10	7	2	10	6	22	Scotland	10	7	2	23	10	23						
Lithuania	10	5	4	13	12	13	Greece	10	5	0	23	12	12						
Ukraine	10	4	6	13	13	11	Austria	10	5	0	23	12	12						
Slovenia	10	3	5	13	11	11	Faroe Islands	10	5	0	23	12	12						
Estonia	10	0	10	3	31	0	San Marino	10	0	10	2	36	0						

Charlton's 'home' help

Jack Charlton probably would not mind taking his Republic of Ireland team to Wembley in the European Championship, but not just yet. The Republic of Ireland manager is not about to surrender "home" advantage by agreeing to move his side's play-off match against the Netherlands away from a 41,000-capacity Anfield, even if playing there means thousands of Irish supporters having to stay at home.

"At Anfield it will be a home game for our Liverpool players Jason McAteer, Phil Babb and Mark Kennedy – if I pick them off course," Charlton said yesterday. "The crowd there is close to the pitch and the atmosphere will be a great help to us."

Louis Kilkenny, the Football Association of Ireland president, suggested an application for a switch to Wembley so that

more Irish fans – 20,000 of them travelled to Portugal for last night's 3-0 defeat – could buy tickets, but England have a match there, coincidentally against Portugal, the day before the 13 December play-off.

The FA's chief executive, Sean Connolly, said: "Maybe UEFA would have brought pressure to bear but we are not going to ask for a switch, Jack having stated his preference."

Charlton will test the co-operation of leading club managers by invoking the five-day international rule which gives him first call on players, unlike last weekend before the Portuguese defeat, the worst in Charlton's 92-match reign.

Roy Keane will struggle to be fit after hernia surgery, but Ireland's captain, Andy Townsend, should be over his foot problem, having missed Wednesday's defeat, the worst in Charlton's 92-match reign.

Charlton will be helped by the fact that he has been given a second chance by the FA, having been given a one-month ban for a foul on a player during the 1992 European Championships.

Charlton's 'home' help

TICKETS FOR THE FINALS

LIZ SEARL

Although Euro 96 is still seven months away and the draw has yet to be made, more than 65 per cent of available tickets have already been sold.

England are the only team who know where they will be playing (at Wembley) in the group matches. If they proceed, England would play at Wembley or Anfield in the quarter-finals and Wembley or Old Trafford in the semi-finals. Wembley has now sold 86 per cent of its current allocation for all matches.

Early buyers boost sales

Croatia

Bloomed, for the first time in a major tournament, at USA '94. Previously poor travellers and qualifying defeats in Germany and Georgia, plus a draw in Albania, suggests that problem is not eradicated. Bulk of the team play outside Bulgaria from Hristo Stoichkov at Parma, to Borislav Mihailov at Reading. The consequence has been a poor domestic game – not one club side reached the second round in the European competitions – but a flourishing national side. Could be a real threat in their first appearance in these finals.

Denmark

The holders, having won in Sweden after being recalled from their holidays just weeks before the 1992 finals when Yugoslavia were expelled. They then won the Intercontinental Cup – contested by the six continental champions – in January to show it was no one-off. Many players, including Peter Schmeichel, the Manchester United goalkeeper, were missing. Richard Moller Nielsen, the mastermind behind the 1992 win, will retire after the finals. Denmark's fourth in succession.

TEAM-BY-TEAM GUIDE TO THE QUALIFIERS

Bulgaria

Inconsistent. Beaten in Luxembourg and to a draw in Malta, they then took four points of both the Netherlands and Norway to top their group. Domestic problems with widespread belief that the last league title was "fixed" in favour of Sparta Prague. Jan Stejskal, once of QPR, now with runners-up in Warsaw Prague, withdrew from the national team in protest while a poll showed 89 per cent of fans disbelieved denial by the president of the Czech federation. Winners in 1976, but have not qualified since 1980.

France

Fighted with danger but eventually qualified in style – and without Eric Cantona, David Ginola or Jean-Pierre Papin. Some very exciting talent in Yann Djalouz, Patrice Loko and Christian Karembeu. A bold approach from the coach, Aimé Jacquet, who gave Zinedine Zidane a debut in the key match in Romania, and he scored twice. Winners in 1984 at home, and a good outside bet this time. But would they play at Old Trafford without Eric, or at St James' Park without "Davide"?

England

Only pedigree in this competition – just a third place in 1968 – but will never have a better chance.

Germany

Perennial favourites in their sixth successive finals, a European Championship record. Jürgen Klinsmann will relish a return to England and the whole team will be looking to go one better than in 1968. Tremendous record in these championships – winners in 1972 and 1980, and twice runners-up, including the last final in Sweden. Berti Vogts, the coach, has tended to rely on Borussia Dortmund and Bayern Munich for the bulk of his team. Often criticised, but usually come good when it matters.

Italy

Arigo Sacchi, despite only losing the World Cup final on penalties, continues to be castigated at home, not least for his continued exclusion of Gianfranco Vialli. However, the emergence of Vialli's team-mates, Fabrizio Ravanelli and Alessandro Del Piero, has eased the Italians' passage. Will be among the favourites for a competition they have only won once, at home in 1968. Can be attractive to watch but, as ever, results when it matters, as in drawing away to Croatia with 10 men.

Portugal

Europe's up-and-coming team, with impressive results being gained at all levels. The senior side eventually qualified with an ease which beat four successive failures at world and European level.

Russia

The most impressive of all qualifiers, unbeaten and only held twice – both times by Scotland. Have a long pedigree, in various guises, in this competition, having won the first, in 1960, and been runners-up three times. The team is based around Spartak Moscow

FIRST TEST: Atherton gives valuable solidity as England offer hope for the series after recovering from another depressing start

Hick's sense of history averts crisis

Cricket

MARTIN JOHNSON
reports from Pretoria
England 221-4
v South Africa

When it came to making history yesterday, the fact that the last TV pictures of an England-South Africa Test match were broadcast in black and white was a reasonably strong contender, but compared to England failing to make a total porridge of the first day of a Test series, it was not really in the same frame.

Twenty-four hours into most recent series, England have effectively been history themselves, but after initially threatening to disappear down the same depressing plughole, Graeme Hick and Michael Atherton provided hope that England's batsmen versus South Africa's fast bowlers will not be the one-sided contest many people feared.

Atherton, whose long-standing back trouble may be partially due to the amount of time he has carried his team on it, made a typically stoical 78 before splicing the second new ball to guilty, while Hick, whose expression range normally runs from blank to deadpan, was delighted by a wonderfully positive fourth test match century, that he only just stopped short of a series of handstands.

These two rallied England from a precarious 64 for 3, and if Atherton - who had grown visibly more weary after lunch - had managed to hang on until the close, it would have been an even more satisfying day. As for South Africa the only real bonus was a highly impressive debut from another fast bowler, Pollock. Shaun.

As England, having preferred Richard Illingworth to Devon

Malcolm, would have batted first by choice had they not been invited to their first Test match toss against South Africa for 30 years was something of an irrelevance. They will also have been relieved that the pitch was a long way from the trampoline that was forecast, even though Atherton - hit twice on the helmet and once on the shoulder - ended the day with a bruise and a headache.

The history of the occasion was slightly lost on the South African public, who turned up for the first Test between these two countries in 30 years in something closer to dribbles than droves. On top of which, if there was one black face in the crowd of 9,300, it was hard to spot among all the white and red ones.

Why this should have been is hard to say, although the fact that this match is being played in the mainly white region of what used to be called Verwoerburg might have had something to do with it. A place with that kind of name would hardly have had blacks queuing up outside the estate agents' windows.

More likely, though, is the fact that the Test match culture was all but lost to the instant variety during the years of isolation, and a one-day froth society will need a bit of weaning back on to solids. Whether yesterday will have helped is a moot point, in that South Africa's attack is one-dimensional to the point of utter tedium.

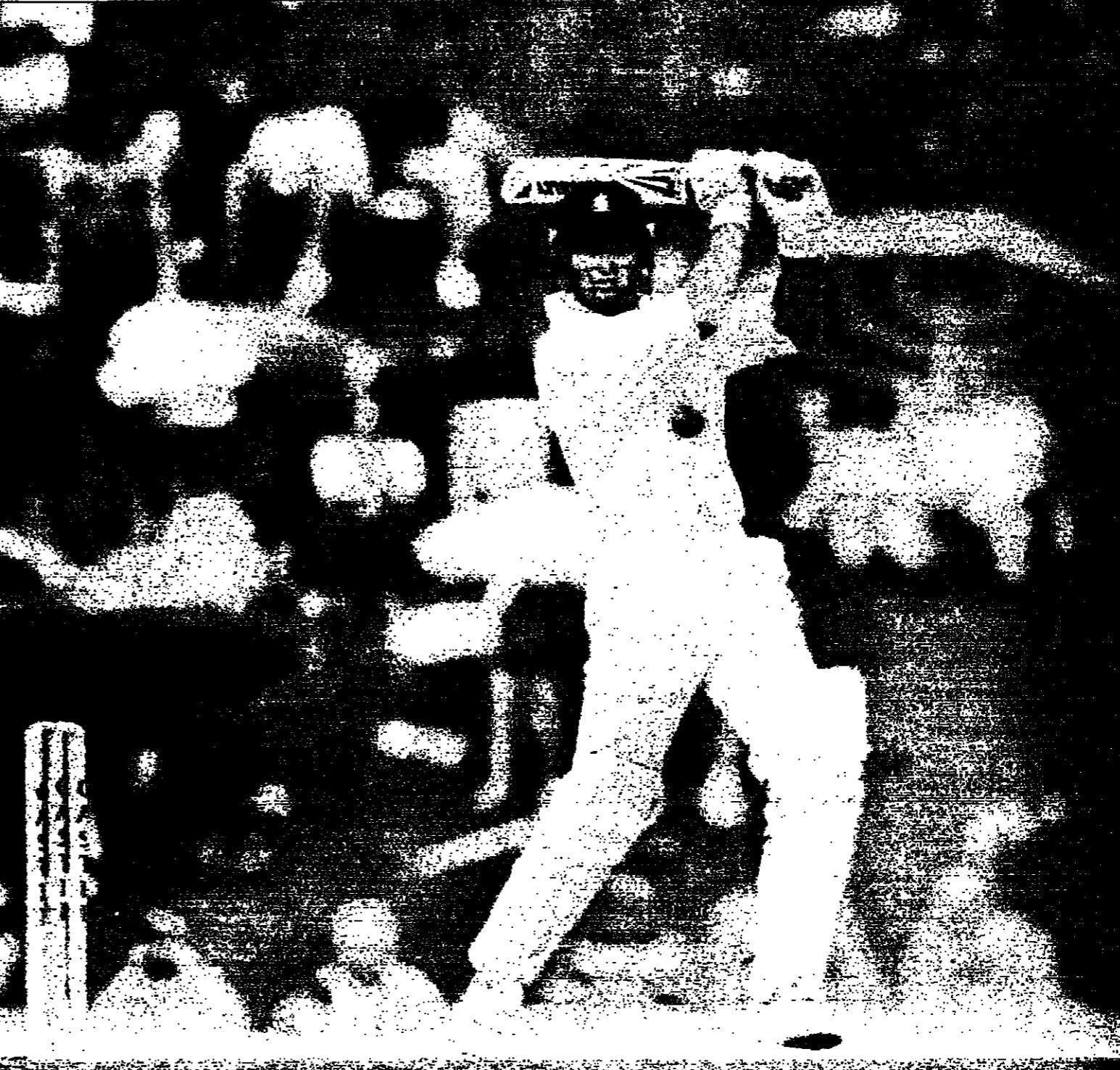
However, their fielding is probably even more brilliant than Australia's, and the diving catch at backward square-leg to dismiss Alec Stewart off a full-blooded pull was close to unbelievable. What was even more remarkable was the fact that the fielder, Craig Matthews, spilled a relatively simple return catch offered by Hick on 67.

At the best example, though, is a TV advert in which a bare-bottomed Will Carling lookalike clammers into the Princess of Wales' bedroom, only to find he has been beaten to it by the entire South African rugby team.

Neither was there much subtlety about the way South Africa bowled to Atherton and Hick in particular, but while Atherton battled away in largely heroic defence for five and a half hours, Hick was unrecognisable as the timid character he often looks when cricket balls are fizzing past his visor.

Allan Donald and Pollock were always a handful, but Hick was imperviously dismissive of the distinctly undangerous back-up team of Brett Schultz, Matthews and Brian McMillan. Hick's first delivery, a no-ball from Pollock which he pavishly spliced out on the leg side, gave no hint of the spanking he was about to deliver.

Hick's ability has never been in question, merely his character. This was the first time he has done it for England in a crisis and, to give the man his due, it was not far short of brilliant.



Staying power: Graeme Hick drives through the covers during his century at Centurion Park yesterday

Photograph: Graham Chadwick/Allsport

'I had a lot to prove to people and myself'

Graeme Hick's fourth Test hundred yesterday provided some welcome evidence that he is coming to terms with pace bowling at Test match level.

Last summer's three-figure contribution against the West Indies on a low, slow Trent Bridge pitch still left a question mark over Hick's technique when facing quick bowling.

But here, there was enough bounce to keep South Africa's fast men - led by Allan Donald - interested. They

tried plenty of bouncers but Hick responded with 21 boundaries in his priceless, unbeaten 105.

"Playing fast, bowling has been something I've worried about in the past," Hick admitted. "But it's not anything that really bothers me."

If that sounds contradictory, the Worcestershire batsman was altogether easier to follow during his four-hour innings.

Since being dropped at Old Trafford last summer, Hick has

responded with Test scores of 118 not out, 7, 96, 51 not out and now an unbeaten 105. At last, the player who has dominated county cricket is showing his worth at Test level.

"It was very disappointed to be left out during the summer and had a lot to prove to people and myself after that," he said.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the day and think it was quite an important hundred."

However, Hick's contribution was not the only highlight

"We took a gamble," admitted Bob Woolmer, their English coach.

"He played very well," said Hick, after his stand of 142 with Atherton. "We've had a good day - it would have been a superb day if Mike was still at the crease."

For South Africa, electing to field first with an all-pace attack did not have the desired effect of wreaking havoc with the England batsmen.

"That's what Test cricket is all about. But our bowlers kept at it and a couple of quick wickets in the morning will make it look a different game."

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Blues await decision on assault charges

Football

PHIL SHAW

Officials of an Italian Serie B club, Ancona, met last night to decide whether to press assault charges against unspecified Birmingham City players following violent scenes after an Anglo-Italian Cup tie on Wednesday.

The "Battle of Ancona" left the local club's coach, Massimo Cacciatori, nursing a fractured cheekbone and an eye wound. Cacciatori, who was taken to hospital but did not require surgery, alleged that his injuries were inflicted by Liam Daish, the Birmingham defender, during a fracas in the dressing-room area after an ill-tempered match.

Reports from Italy suggested that police may seek the extradition of as many as four members of the Birmingham party. Under Italian law, criminal proceedings are automatic if an individual is certified unfit to work by a doctor for 20 days or more. Conviction for assault can carry

a prison sentence of up to three years, but if Cacciatori is given less than 20 days to recover, he can sue his alleged assailant(s) only through the civil courts.

A spokesman for Ancona maintained that Cacciatori had been "punched and butted" during an "outrageous" attack. He added: "What's happened is that's what they want to say, let them. Nothing happened," Daish said. Television pictures showed the coach being wheeled away on a stretcher, evidently with face wounds.

Barry Fry, the Birmingham manager, initially blamed his opposite number "a disgrace" for his alleged incursions on to the pitch, but by the time Birmingham's plane landed in Britain, the normally effusive Fry was tight-lipped. The club secretary, Alan Jones, issued a terse "no comment" yesterday.

The Anglo-Italian Cup has suffered from poor crowds and disciplinary problems since being resurrected in 1992. Only 800 spectators, including 92 Birmingham fans, were at Wednesday's match. Ironically, the clubs could well meet again in the final at Wembley next spring.

Cardinal's Intestine was one name suggested but Bishops Finger sounded so much more mouthwatering.



THE SERIOUS BEER WITH THE SILLY NAME.

Leeds finally get their man

Tomas Brolin's transfer from Parma to Leeds should finally go through today for £4.5m, a record for the Yorkshire club.

The fee £600,000 of which Leeds will pay immediately and the rest over two and a half years - will also be a Swedish record.

Brolin, who played for Sweden in Stockholm on Wednesday, was due in Leeds last night and could make his debut at home to Chelsea tomorrow.

Parma had announced that the move was off because the 25-year-old Brolin had failed to agree personal terms. However, Bill Fotherby, Leeds' managing director, said: "Parma have been back to me to say the deal is on. I have been confident

all along that the transfer would go through."

Brolin, who will play as an attacking midfielder for Leeds, has played only three games for Parma this season and his career has been in the doldrums since he broke a foot a year ago.

Sheffield United have been

barred by the Football League

from making any signings until they repay £50,000 borrowed from the Professional Footballers' Association to pay the team's wages last week. The League's action prevented the Leeds United winger David White from joining on loan yesterday.

David Webb, the Brentford

manager, has called in the police after being drawn into the

transfer "bung" row. Webb

was last week alleged to have accepted a £20,000 payment from Terry Venables when he was Southampton's manager and Venables was at Tottenham.

The claim was made in court

by Jeffrey Fugler, who is suing

Venables for £20,000 which he says is owed to him for a mar-

ket deal.

Webb now believes there is

a dirty tricks campaign

being waged against him, including

phone taps. "I am appalled at

the campaign against Terry

Venables and the use of innocent bystanders like me to destabilise his position," he said. "I'm fed up and will be reporting the matter to the police and the football authorities."

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2834, Friday 17 November 1995

By Sparros

Thursday's Solution

CELESTA SACKFUL
A CITY YO O O
LOGARITHMICALLY
L H A I P K D A
O C T E R C R O S S B U L
U M O S C R O S S N T
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M A G N E T O E L E C T R I C
A U E N E L M J
N A N A T T E D R E S S E D

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
9 10
11 12 13
14 15
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20 21
22 23
24

ACROSS
1 Fellow in wrecked car is soon-
2 French, I appreciate, on re-
3 reflection, will be unresponsive
4 Pull a fast one, introducing an
5 improvisatory composition
6 Persuaded to include infor-
7 mation in story
8 Revealing bit of Swiss folk-
lore? (4-4)
9 Sphere's actual mass (5)
10 Look, mate, resistance is use-
less - I'm a skilled worker (9)
11 Believe story offered by re-
tailer to valued customer? (6)
12 Derive calculus increment
that's definite, after reworking (4)
13 Minor burn? (9)
14 Object to night in Paris being
finally cancelled - it's a bore
(5)

DOWN
1 Journalist given pamphlet to
take away (8)
2 Took his time to receive
one broadcast? (7)
3 A certain element's starting off
in disgrace (5)
4 Dance in which you don't
move at all? It's a bolter? (7,
4)
5 Puma foreign aristocrat traps
in America (9)
6 Brake, stupid, when on out-
skirts of encampment? (7)

Guarantee clubs will be freed

from blame (6)

Arrange to give talk about

Queen on the box (11)

Economic problem assumes

increased dimension (9)

Sensitive meeting involving

priest and Conservative (8)

Popular hero, brave, with large

heart? (7)

Drunken seaman, one in a

state of oblivion? (7)

Advantageous rise Fulham

overlooked to some extent (6)

Former pupil about to crack

up (5)

Guarantee clubs will be freed

from blame (6)

Pull a fast one, introducing an

improvisatory composition (8)

Persuaded to include infor-

mation in story (6)

Revealing bit of Swiss folk-

lore? (4-4)

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